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NAME OF AUTHOR/*NOM DE L'AUTEUR* JOHN DAVID MIGHTON

TITLE OF THESIS/*TITRE DE LA THÈSE* WYNDHAM LEWIS: CLOTHING AS METAPHOR

UNIVERSITY/*UNIVERSITÉ* ALBERTA

DEGREE FOR WHICH THESIS WAS PRESENTED/ *GRADE POUR LEQUEL CETTE THÈSE FUT PRÉSENTÉE* PhD

YEAR THIS DEGREE CONFERRED/*ANNÉE D'OBTENTION DE CE GRADE* 1975

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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

WYNDHAM LEWIS: CLOTHING AS METAPHOR

by

JOHN DAVID MIGHTON ©

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT ENGLISH

EDMONTON, ALBERTA
FALL, 1975

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled WYNDHAM LEWIS: CLOTHING AS METAPHOR submitted by John David Mighton in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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ABSTRACT

From the earliest stages of his career Wyndham Lewis expressed an almost obsessive interest in the external as the manifestation of life's essential energies. This interest is apparent not only in his work as a painter and writer, but also in his attempt to train people in the use of their eyes so that they might understand the significance of the images with which they are surrounded, and by which they are frequently manipulated.

Lewis's preoccupation with the surface of existence is further characterized by his perception that virtually every aspect of man's physical surroundings and psychological projections is recognizable as a form of clothing. The metaphor of clothing becomes a probe for investigating the nature of human extensions. The Wild Body contains Lewis's most profound investigations into the "chemistry of personality" in the clothing of the self. The image of the world as a stage and the concept of role as garment recur frequently in Lewis's work as a technique of satire as well as an expression of the absurdity that characterizes human existence.

In Tarr and The Apes of God Lewis dramatized the manner in which artists and pseudo-artists clothe themselves. The characters of Lewis's first novel, Tarr, are all delineated by the manner in which they are clothed. Much of the novel's action consists of psychological skirmishes in which one

character seeks to strip the other while maintaining the protection of his own cover. The nature of human extensions in general, and the particular problem for the genuine artist of the existence of members of a bourgeois-bohemian community who usurp his role as a form of entertainment, are two of the principal subjects that he explores. The Apes of God is a satirical attack on a cultural establishment whose members attempt to maintain their prestige by clinging to the lifeless remnants of the past or by adopting the currently fashionable.

Lewis's concern for the survival of the individual in his own time led him to pursue a vigorous and sustained examination of the nature of politics. He became convinced early in his career that the essence of politics consists in disguising the ugly realities of the struggle for power beneath cloaks that deceive the public. He examines the techniques involved in "putting on" the public in a number of polemical works, and in Childermass and The Revenge For Love he explores the significance of clothing in the relationship between the ruler and the ruled.

Lewis was also concerned with the spiritual welfare of the individual in what had become only a nominally Christian community. In "The Bishop's Fool" and The Red Priest Lewis considers the forces to which members of the Christian community are subjected in a period of political and ideological ferment. Lewis focuses on the significance of clothing in his creation of two clerics who represent alternative directions in which the Christian church might move.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

"The Artist Older than the Fish"

Lewis's interest in clothing is related to the basic tenets of an aesthetic that were formed early and that remained consistent throughout his career. The Vorticist movement, with Lewis as its principal force, advocated a fresh independence in its attitude toward art, although this independence was not intended to suggest a wholesale rejection of the past. Indeed, a respect for some of the same qualities as those found in classical art was, in Lewis's view, fundamental to Vorticism. His blessing of the hairdresser in Blast for the creation of clean orderly lines out of relative chaos was meant to suggest this attitude. "Bless the Hairdresser," he recalls in Blasting and Bombardiering (1937) was "merely a humorous way of stating the classic standpoint, as against the romantic. Need I say that I am in complete agreement, here, with Mr. W. L. of 1914?"[1] Lewis's intention was to encourage a rediscovery of life's intrinsic energies as a prerequisite for the creation of an art, the "fundamental injunction" of which was "to invent,"[2] as he puts it in Wyndham Lewis the Artist. From 'Blast' to Burlington House: "The artist goes back to the fish. The few centuries that separate him from the savage are a mere flea-bite to the distance his memory must stretch if it is to strike the fundamental slime of creation. And it is the condition, the very first gusto of creation in this scale of life in which we are set, that he must reach, before he, in his turn, can create!"[3] Works of art should, then, be composed of the simplest and most direct forms emerging from and reflecting the activity of pure energy. Lewis's appreciation at finding works informed by this ideal is evident in his comments on some German woodcuts that he viewed at the Twenty-One Gallery in 1914:

> This art is African, in that it is sturdy, cutting through every time to the monotonous wall of space, and intense yet hale: permeated by Eternity, an atmosphere in which only the black core of Life rises and is silhouetted.
>
> The black, nervous fluid of existence flows and forms into hard, stagnant masses in this white, luminous body. Or it is like a vivid sea pierced by rocks, on to the surface of which boned shapes rise and bask blackly.[4]

And in "A Review of Contemporary Art," written in 1915, he praises the efforts of several groups whose work is directed towards the discovery of life's fundamental forms: "The painters have cut away and cut away warily, till they have trapped some essential. European painting to-day is like the laboratory of an anatomist: things stand up stark and denuded everywhere as the result of endless visionary examination. But Life, more life than ever before, is the objective. . . ."[5]

Lewis's dissatisfaction with most contemporary art and, indeed, with the cultural environment in general led him, in the initial stages of his career, to an attitude that was, he confesses, naively idealistic:

> The epigraph at the beginning of my first novel, 'Tarr', is an expression of the same mood, which took a long time to evaporate altogether. It is a quotation from Montaigne. 'Que c'est un mol chevet que l'ignorance et l'incuriosité?' Even books, theoretically, were a bad thing, one was much better without them. Every time men borrowed something from outside they gave away something of themselves, for these acquisitions were artificial aggrandisement of the self, but soon there would be no core left. And it was the core that mattered. Books only muddied the mind: men's minds were much stronger when they only read the Bible.
>
> The human personality, I thought, should be left alone, just as it is, in its pristine freshness: something like a wild garden--full, naturally, of starlight and nightingales, of sunflowers and the sun. The 'Wild Body' I envisaged as a piece of the wilderness. The characters I chose to celebrate--Bestre, the Cornac and his wife, Brotcotnaz, le père Francois--were all primitive creatures, immersed in life, as much as birds; or big, obsessed, sun-drunk insects.[6]

His early attraction to the crudest forms of life for the beauty of their unsophisticated vitality was dependent, he says, upon a puerile and restricting misconception: "It seems to involve the error that raw material is alone authentic life. I mistook for 'the civilised' the tweed-draped barbaric clown of the golf-links. But, as a philosophy of life, it principally failed in limiting life in a sensational sense. After two or three intermediate stages I reached ultimately an outlook that might be described as almost as formal as this earliest one was the reverse."[7] A letter to Augustus John, written about 1914, indicates Lewis's subsequent scorn for the romantic primitiveness he detected in some quarters, as does his urge to write a few words in the New Age "scourging the 'banal' nakedness of various 'Return to Nature', shits."[8] What Lewis wished to advance was neither a movement towards abstraction nor a radical divesting of all externals in a celebration of raw nature, but the creation of stark visual forms that manifest directly the fundamental energy they contain.

Lewis's preoccupation with "the externality of things"

Lewis's art, it is well known, concentrates heavily on the external. One reason for this was a simple delight in the surface of things, as he explains in Blasting and Bombardiering:

> The look, the gait, the smell, the vocabulary of people excites me to the greatest interest. The whining accents of the Swede, the grimaces of the French, the impassibility of the Japanese, I can observe for hours together with unflagging attention. And it need not worry you from whence I derive this interest. Enough that we share a common excitement.
>
> I am not an anatomist. I enjoy the surface of life, if not for its own sake, at least not because it conceals the repulsive turbidness of the intestine. Give me the dimple in the cheek of the Gioconda or of St. John the Baptist, and you can have all the Gothic skeletons or superealist guts that you like! And what applies to the body applies likewise to the mind. I do not like all these doctors. Give me the surface of the mind, as well. Give me the outside of all things, I am a fanatic for the externality of things.[9]

Quite apart from his preoccupation with the visual as a matter of personal preference, Lewis argued that an understanding of the dynamic energies of life can in fact be acquired by art that focuses its attention on the external. He writes always, he says in Time and Western Man, from an "occupational" position, a position he has chosen "as responding to an exceptional instinct or bias."[10] It is "in the service of things of vision," he says, "that my ideas are mobilized."[11] Prejudice against the visual, he believed, is generated by a variety of currently popular sources that rely on the emotions rather than on the intellect for their judgement, and then claim "life" as their authority: "A preoccupation with the vitals of things is related to vitalist enthusiasms. 'Life' (of the 'Up life! down art!' cry) means invariably the smoking-hot inside of things, in contrast to the hard, cold, formal skull or carapace. The emotional of the bergsonian dogma is the heat, moisture, shapelessness, and tremor of the vitals of life. The intellectual is the ectodermic case, the ideality of the animal machine with its skin on."[12]

George Santayana, in his Soliloquies in England and Later Soliloquies, expresses a point of view that is consonant with Lewis's defense of the external at a time when it was fashionable to be involved in a discovery of a more profound truth in the "sexual viscera and the 'dark' gushings of the tides of The Great Within,"[13] as Lewis puts it in Satire and Fiction. Santayana argues, as Lewis does in Time and Western

Man, that no amount of internal probing will expose the ultimate source of what we see in any case. Nevertheless, the fashionable tendency is to disdain appearances in favor of a supposedly more authentic reality beneath: "Living things in contact with the air must acquire a cuticle, and it is not urged against cuticles that they are not hearts; yet some philosophers seem to be angry with images for not being things, and with words for not being feelings. Words and images are like shells, no less integral parts of nature than are the substances they cover, but better addressed to the eye and more open to observation."[14] In Satire and Fiction Lewis cites critics of The Apes of God who describe the book as "an orgy of the externals of this life of ours," and himself as "a personal-appearance writer."[15] As a satirist, Lewis was, in his own view, inextricably occupied with externals. Satire, he says in "Studies in the Art of Laughter," is "constructed out of the dry shells and pelts of things. The surface of the visible machinery of life alone is used. . . .All is metalic--all is external."[16] Rather than search for truth beneath the surface, Lewis concentrated intensely on what is visible to the eye until its significance became evident. The utilitarian aim of Lewis's satire was to train people to employ "the wisdom of the eye" to recognize the meaning of the forms they see.

In addition to satisfying his own ideals, Lewis realized the responsibility of the artist to the society upon which he depended for his living. The Caliph's Design was written to encourage the creation of more authentic architectural designs, not for the delectation of an artistic elite, but for the benefit of everyone. Indeed, the beauty of the surface of things is of relatively greater importance to the common man than to the artist, Lewis believed, because the former's life is predominantly superficial: "The life of the crowd, of the common or garden man, is exterior. He can only live through others, outside himself. He, in a sense, is the houses, the railings, the bunting or absence of bunting. His beauty and justification is in a superficial exterior life."[17] The artist, he recognized, is capable of substantially affecting the lives of everyone, not only by training peoples' eyes in order to have them understand what they see, but by actually effecting a change in the design of the environment: "The artist has the same moral influence as the dress-maker. A bird-like hat in process of time produces a bird."[18] In The Caliph's Design Lewis insists on the need for a "complete reform . . . of every notion or lack of notion on the significance of the appearance of the world. . . ."[19] The exterior of a building, he believed, should be a natural outgrowth of the spirit that animates it in the same way that clothing should say something about the wearer: "For if you say that the design and ornaments over the body of the building is the same as the clothes on a man's back, there is still something to be said about the naked shape of the man or even for his skeleton. The nature of the body or of the skeleton will decide what the character of the clothes must be."[20]

The external as clothing

Lewis's preoccupation with the external, for reasons already cited, was characterized by his inclination to see the external as clothing. It was one of the peculiarities of Lewis's mind that when he explored the meaning of almost any aspect of the surface of existence he tended to describe it in terms of clothing, as though the concept of clothing was dominant in his consciousness. As Lewis's work so often demonstrates, the idea of clothing has extraordinary metaphoric potential for describing the nature of man's surroundings; virtually any type of physical enclosure--dress, room, house, city--may be recognized as an extension of his essential human covering.[21] Clothing as metaphor is also frequently employed by Lewis to describe mental and emotional attitudes that extend from the inner self.

The word employed most frequently in Lewis's work to describe virtually any covering or manifestation is "shell." Used in a variety of contexts, it becomes a probe for new discoveries about the external. That is, each time Lewis employs the word "shell" in a particular context it brings with it the meaning acquired by its use in a previous context. The cumulative metaphorical effect of the repeated use of the word in divergent contexts to indicate some outward manifestation of the self is that one experiences a new awareness about the nature of what is meant by "shell" as well as about those things it has been employed to describe.[22] The same principle applies generally to Lewis's use of the concept of clothing. His unique descriptive techniques provide an expanded notion of the significance of clothing in its conventional sense, as well as fresh insights into the nature of what is described in terms of clothing.

Many of the ideas about the human psyche and the manner in which it is clothed are formulated and dramatized in The Wild Body. In subsequent fiction Lewis explored the clothing of the personality by creating a number of characters who are artists or pseudo-artists. As the years passed, however, he found himself increasingly absorbed with politics, so that many of his works examine its ugly realities through the clothing of both real and fictional figures. Although his interest in religion was less absorbing than his interest in art and politics, Lewis created two figures late in his career whose clothing suggests alternative paths for the future of the Christian church. Whatever the context of his writing, however, Lewis's insights are consistently based on pragmatic analyses of the manner in which his figures make their appearance in the world.

CHAPTER TWO

CLOTHING AS HUMAN EXTENSION: AN EXAMINATION OF THE "CHEMISTRY OF PERSONALITY" IN THE WILD BODY

Manifestations of the self

As a man intensely interested in the nature of human personality Lewis found the study of its complex extensions to be at least as revealing as the attempt to discover the composition of the self beneath the surface. He recognized that it is an inherent human characteristic to seek self-identification or, alternatively, to avoid disclosure of the self, either physically or psychologically, by means of external addition. He saw in this practice not merely a human weakness, but also a psychological necessity for, as he explains in The Wild Body, the profound experience of self-awareness that occurs only in brief flashes, like summer lightning, would be intolerable if sustained for very long. The characters of Lewis's fiction are invariably observed playing roles in which they adopt various clichés of appearance, gesture, speech, or mental attitude for their own psychological protection or in pursuit of victory over an opponent. Lewis's work provides a unique discovery of the complicated relationship between the human self and its extensions.

One of Lewis's major concerns throughout his career was the fate of the individual in a system that increasingly threatens personal identity. Time and Westerm Man and The Art of Being Ruled examine various aspects of modern civilization that affect the nature of the relationship between the self and its superficial manifestations. In the former Lewis reveals the tendency of modern philosophy and psychology virtually to eliminate the notion of a unique and individual self by a variety of scientific analyses. Schopenhauer's idea of "will," which posits a life force common to us all, and James's emphasis on the mutability of the self, constitute threats to any notion of a stable and unique personality. Contemporary psychology, as exemplified in the work of the behaviorists, depends on the underlying assumption that there is not more to the person than what can be observed materially. The unfortunate result of these modern mechanistic systems is the gradual reduction in importance of human individuality: "So the one personality, as found in the Renaissance, for example, hardly exists with us. Each man is every man, an abstraction, not a concrete person. And we wear the coat of one neighbor one day, and of another the next. The stable personality is indeed suspect, as all personality is suspect--for 'personality,' as we use that term, is nothing but stability, and stability of any sort at all is hated and is suspect, necessarily, in a period of revolutionary change so absolute as the present. . . ."[1]

It can easily be shown, Lewis argued, that there are many subtle pressures in society that cause the truly important values of life to be replaced by merely superficial ones. These conditions are evident in the world of fashion, which is symptomatic of the general emphasis on the exteriorization of the personality. Lewis cites the contemporary debate about how a "modern woman" might assert herself--a debate in which it is assumed that "the more a woman complicates her attire, the more she 'develops her personality.'"[2] The result is that the naked unsophisticated body--the "thing itself"--comes to be regarded as a mere abstraction, if indeed it is regarded at all: "To 'develop the personality' is an alluring invitation, but it invariably covers some process that is guaranteed to strip a person bare of all 'personality' in a fort-night."[3] Short skirts, the subject of attention because of their sexual suggestiveness, rather than serving to advance the daring "sexishness" of any woman, Lewis says, serve instead to reduce or eliminate her personality: "It is much rather intended to uniform and discipline it, to teach it to be neat and handy, to induce it to dispense with that costly luxury, 'personality,' instead of to 'develop' it, as it pretends; to train people to be satisfied to be just like their neighbors, hat for hat, and button for button. . . ."[4] The promotion of particular fashions may provide an amusingly absurd spectacle, as in the case of a woman whose personality has not yet assimilated the induced addition to her person:

> In periods when fashion has imposed a particularly short skirt, for instance, often some self-conscious woman will be seen behaving strangely, as though it were not she who had bought and put on what she is wearing. In the adjustment of the curtailed sheath to her legs, in her expression as she arranges it, or simply as she parades it in the street, there is an implied detachment. Her manner or expression suggests that it is a part of her person which has grown there, as fatally fixed as the feet on the end of her legs. . . . The occurrence of things, independent of the personal will, is implied in the relation of the self-conscious woman to her dress, whose 'extremism' has enveloped her, or left her uncovered, in a semi-elemental manner.[5]

The Art of Being Ruled, written at the same time as Time and Western Man, examines the human weaknesses that allow easy domination of the masses by executive intelligences. It is clearly advantageous for those who govern to promote the sacrifice of individualism in favor of a "group personality." And it is found that people are generally quite willing to submit themselves to classification: "Men have to found a class for the reception of any newly recognized idea of importance. . . . To be good, a deceived husband, an artist, a one-legged man, at once lands an individual in some aggregation or class. . . ."[6] A similar result is achieved through what Lewis refers to as the "piecemealing of the personality." Identity is destroyed because identification is made by reference to certain stages of development in time. The person is recognized simply as a child, adolescent,

---

youth, adult: "So Master Smith and Mister Smith are as different almost (when they are the same person at different ages of Smith's career) as though they were offspring and parent."[7] This practice leads to still further reductions: "You can with luck cut men up so thoroughly that they become almost 'six-months men,' as they might be called, rather than men of one continuous personal life--than 'life men.'"[8]

A short piece, "The Dress-Body-Mind Aggregate," written during the same period that produced Time and Western Man and The Art of Being Ruled, contains some observations about the exteriorization of personality through dress. While Lewis admits that many people dress in a completely haphazard way, it is nonetheless true that clothing may be a very significant indicator of personality. Furthermore, he says rather facetiously, "often it would be accepted as true that there was nothing in the personality that was not expressed in the dress or presence. A still further step would be to affirm that more was expressed in the dress than existed anywhere else in any mysterious within. In short, that the shop was its shop-window, and that window-dressing was shop-dressing. That the window ought to be the finest thing about the shop. For all said and done very few people ever come into the shop, whereas a great many people pass it."[9] Several examples are cited to indicate that dress is often symbolic of the mental or physical attitude the wearer wishes to express. Black clothing is intended by the Puritan to indicate his renunciation of worldliness, while the apparel of the Cavalier indicates the opposite: "The Cavalier would say, in the cut of his petticoat breeches: 'God if He exists is exterior to me. I am not a servant of God, afraid to dress myself up in my master's clothes. I do not consider my body and senses held in trust for any master. I am going to put on my back, and exhibit myself in, all the finery I can lay my hands on. However fine, it will not be worthy of me.'"[10] The American man of recent years wished to indicate by his baggy trousers and wide shoulders that he was big and athletic while his currently fashionable tight suit says how slim he is. The two former examples indicate a relation between dress and mind or soul, and the latter a relation between dress and body. "For when talking about dress," Lewis concludes, "you are really talking about the people inside the dresses, whether they recognize that inside or not, and the dress-body is a co-ordinate, the expression of the mind of the person."[11]

The painter and "The Dress-Body-Mind-Aggregate"

Lewis's paintings, especially the portraits, make considerable use of clothing and surrounding objects to represent character. Hugh Kenner, in "The Visual World of Wyndham

Lewis," explains how Lewis's preoccupation with the external manifests itself in the paintings: "People, in these pictures, are visual stuff for the arch-Vorticist to feed on, and refusing to respond to some 'restless, quick flame-like ego' he transfers them to exactly the same plane of interest as insect-forms or totems or suits of armour. The flesh, the clothes, the chair, all constitute an austere exoskeleton. . . ."[12] Clothing is of particular interest in several of Lewis's most famous portraits. One obvious example is the painting of Chancellor Capen in which the extravagent robes dominate and provide for a formal, academic gesture. Commenting on this work, Kenner says: "Behind such achievements lies not only Lewis's visual sense but his critical intelligence; no other painter had given such thought to what costume might signify, to the rituals of assertion and concealment in which twentieth-century appearances are immersed, to the relation between fashion and the small inflections of fashion, by taste, by posture, or by habitual gesture, that establish an incremental individuality."[13] In his analysis of the portrait of T. S. Eliot, Kenner again emphasizes the importance of clothing. Lewis gave his full attention to the tailoring in the picture, Kenner says, "transforming the business suit--waistcoat, cuff buttons, lapels--into an entegument of planes and edges as formal as Renaissance armour. It is precisely here, of course, that an Academy portrait dissolves into apologetic brush-strokes; but Lewis saw no reason to suppose twentieth-century men's clothing any less iconographic than the costumes of the Medici."[14] Eliot himself is known to have had a considerable interest in his own attire, and his taste reflected his artistic values, as is apparent in the remark of his London tailor, quoted by Kenner: "'Remarkable man, Mr. Eliot.' (Pause.) 'Very good taste.' (Pause.) 'Nothing ever quite in excess.'"[15] The Edith Sitwell portrait, in Kenner's view, makes use of clothing and setting for satiric purposes. It is, he asserts, "a monumental exercise in satire. Its principle strategy is to cause Miss Sitwell to disappear into a mirror-maze of accessories."[16] This reading is certainly consistent with Lewis's frequent exposure of the tendency for people to rely on external additions to magnify their personalities. The capitulation of the human to the mechanical is another aspect of Lewis's satire. In "Praxitella" a comatose leaden head seems to have been placed on the top of an enormous, bulbous outfit that dominates what little suggestion of life still exists in its mechanical inmate. The stiff, geometric shapes of the dress are consonant with the metallic head, mechanical hands, and rigidly placed shoes.

The Wild Body

The Wild Body contains Lewis's earliest and most profound meditations about the makeup of human personality. Directing his enquiry, characteristically, to primary sources, Lewis posits the existence in everyone of an inner self which he calls the "Wild Body." "The Wild Body," he states, "is that small, primitive, literally antediluvian vessel in which we set out on our adventures. Or regarded as a brain, it is rather a winged magic horse, that transports us hither and thither, sometimes rushing, as in the chinese cosmogonies, up and down the outer reaches of space."[17] And, further, the "Wild Body is this supreme survival that is us, the stark apparatus with its set of mysterious spasms; the most profound of which is laughter."[18] This unique and abiding essence is for Lewis the well-spring of human vitality, the ultimate human subsistence, but it is, of course, invisible. Referred to also as a soul, it is described as living "in a cadaverous activity; its dramatic corruption thumps us like a racing engine in the body of a car."[19] So intensely vital is this essence that it cannot emerge in its purest form into the commerce of everyday life: "That soul or dominant corruption is so real that he cannot rise up and take part in man's festival as a Falstaff of unwieldly spume. If he comes at all it must be as he is, the skeleton or bogey of veritable life, stuck over with corruptions and vices."[20]

What emerges as the viable personality is really secondary substance or excrescence, comparable to the shell of a crustacean:

> The chemistry of personality (subterranean in a sort of cemetery, whose decompositions are our lives) puffs up in frigid balls, soapy Snowmen, arctic carnival-masks, which we can photograph and fix.
>
> Upwards from the surface of existence a lurid and dramatic scum oozes and accumulates into the characters we see. The real and tenacious poisons, and sharp forces of vitality, do not socially transpire.[21]

What we observe as human life is merely some sort of materiality which is more or less an approximate suggestion, or objective correlative, of what lies beneath: "A scornful optimism, with its confident onslaughts on our snobbism, will not make material existence a peer for our energy. The gladiator is not a perpetual monument of triumphant health: Napoleon was harried with Elbas: moments of vision are blurred rapidly, and the poet sinks into the rhetoric of will."[22]

As is consistent with his general attitude toward the external, Lewis's perception of the distinction between the subjective self and its necessarily dissipated emergence in the world did not provoke a condemnation of all personal appearances as counterfeit. He preferred, on the contrary, to concentrate on the concrete manifestations that give some recognizable form to life. George Santayana and W. B. Yeats, in their discussions of "mask," give support to

Lewis's arguments in defence of the significance of the external.

For Santayana the deliberate fashioning of an objective self or mask does not imply deception: "Under our published principles and plighted language we must assiduously hide all the inequalities of our moods and conduct, and this without hypocrisy, since our deliberate character is more truly ourself than is the flux of our involuntary dreams."[23] "Fair masks," Santayana says, "like flowers, like sunsets, like melodies wrung out of troubled brains and strung wire, cover for us appropriately the anatomical face of nature; and words and dogmas are other masks, behind which we, too, can venture upon the stage; for it is life to give expression to life, transmuting diffused movements into clear images."[24] One of Lewis's major concerns throughout his career was the quality of the images that are presented to "give expression to life."

Like Lewis, Yeats recognized the inevitable distinction between one's subjective self and the mask or objective self by means of which one appears in the world. He saw that mask can never reflect accurately the subjective personality beneath. Contact with the objective world will inevitably influence the formation of the mask to some extent in spite of the strength of the subjective will. Some incongruency, therefore, will always exist. And the conscious individual will be aware of his subjective self as the observer of his objective self or mask. Having recognized this fact of human existence, Yeats argues in A Vision, that the conscious individual ought, therefore, to choose for himself a mask which will most benefit his own development. This will consist of selecting an antithetical mask or opposing self most different from his own subjective self--a sort of ideal mask which the subjective self will seek to become. The reality of personal identity will, then, be found in the product of the conflict between the subjective self and the consciously imposed mask.

The short stories in The Wild Body dramatize Lewis's thoughts concerning the makeup of human personality and its discovery through appearance. The narrator, Ker-Orr, has an insatiable appetite for observing human behaviour which is best satisfied in the discovery of some visual absurdity: "'Sex' makes me yawn my head off," he says, "but my eye sparkles at once if I catch sight of some stylistic anomaly that will provide me with a new pattern for my grotesque realism."[25] Introducing himself as a "soldier of humour," Ker-Orr proudly asserts his awareness of the essential absurdity of his own being. He perceives clearly, he says, the distinction between his material existence and his intelligence, and the observation of this dichotomy both in himself and in others is the source of his sense of humour:

> My sense of humour in its mature phase has arisen in this very acute consciousness of what is _me_. In playing that off against another hostile _me_, that does not like the smell of mine, probably finds my large teeth, height and so forth abominable, I am in a sense working off my alarm at myself. So I move on a more primitive level than most men, I expose my essential _me_ quite coolly, and all men shy a little. This forked, strange-scented, blond-skinned, gut-bag, with its two bright rolling marbles with which it sees, bull's eyes full of mockery and madness, is my stalking-horse. I hang somewhere in its midst operating it with detachment.[26]

The intensity with which Ker-Orr has been pursuing his current avocation has resulted in the formation of an outfit that he recognizes is curiously emblematic: "My dented _bidon_ of a hat--cantankerous beard--hungarian boots, the soles like the rind of a thin melon slice, the uppers in stark calcinous segments; my cassock-like blue broadcloth coat (why was I like this?--the habits of needy travel grew this composite shell). . . . I glided along on my centipedal boots, dragging my eye upon the rough walls of the houses to my right like a listless cane."[27]

Ker-Orr's two-year campaign results in a number of haphazard meetings with a variety of specimens whose vitality is controlled by some particular fetish. Each story involves a clash between Ker-Orr and another person or between antagonists viewed by him. The mood of the encounters is consistently hostile and is often described in military terms. On the occasions when Ker-Orr is himself a participant the antagonistic attitude he adopts encourages conflict. During his sojourn at Kermanac he reflects proudly on his "powers of personally provoking a series of typhoons in tea-cups."[28] The gist of each encounter involves both antagonists in seeking to achieve victory by unmasking the other or by retaining the protectiveness of their own masks. Clothing is often an important aspect of each mask, but other elements such as speech or countenance are significant as well.

Ker-Orr's first skirmish is with a pseudo-American whom he immediately provokes, anticipating an easy victory. The man's appearance is given detailed scrutiny by Ker-Orr in an effort to determine his character. His open waistcoat is the first article of consequence: "He lay back in his chair, his hat on the back of his head, finishing a bottle of wine with bravado. His waistcoat was open, and this was the only thing about him that did not denote the most facile of victories. This, equivalent to rolling up the sleeves, might be accepted as showing that he respected his enemy."[29] Further examination of the man's attire provides a tantalizing enigma that Ker-Orr is temporarily unable to resolve:

> He was dressed with sombre floridity. In his dark purple-slate suit with thin crimson lines, in his dark red hat-band, in his rose-buff tie, swarming with cerulean fire-flies, in his stormily flowered waistcoat, you felt that his taste

> for the violent and sumptuous had everywhere struggled to assert itself, and everywhere been overcome. But by what? That was the important secret of this man's entire machine, a secret unfolded by his subsequent conduct. Had I been of a superior penetration the cut of his clothes in their awkward amplitude, with their unorthodox shoulders and bellying hams, might have given me the key. He was not a commercial traveller. I was sure of that. For me, he issued from a void. I rejected in turn his claim, on the strength of his appearance, to be a small vineyard owner, a man in the automobile business and a rentier.[30]

Lewis's satire contains many occasions in which the narrator's opinion is formed on the basis of an initial impression, but is later reversed by a subsequent discovery (Lewis's assessment of Rymer in "The Bishop's Fool," for example).

A revealing change occurs when, after learning that Ker-Orr is English and not American as he had assumed, Valmore begins speaking in English with "an american accent of almost alarming perfection."[31] The significance of Valmore's appearance is now made clear; he is playing the role of the American in every way possible. "His was evidently to the full the american, or anglo-saxon american, state of mind: a colossal disdain for everything that does not possess in one way or another an american accent."[32] Even his eyes are now recognized as contributing to the affect: "They were facetted eyes--the eyes of the forty-eight States of the Union."[33] But it is the accent that is the most formidable manifestation of the rebirth of Valmore's energy: "The elemental that he contained and that often woke in him, I expect, manifested itself in his american accent, the capital vessel of his vitality."[34] The emergence of this posture has secured for Valmore a temporary advantage, for the benefit of playing the American, now shifted from Ker-Orr to himself, leaves Ker-Orr temporarily exposed: "He turned on me a look as though I had been unmasked, and his accent became more raucous and formidable."[35]

The two men continue to converse competitively until Ker-Orr stuns his opponent by calling him a "bum" (an American term) from the South of France, and then making a hasty exit to his own room. After recovering from a triumphant fit of laughter he observes his victim below in the kitchen, still, of course, in the attire of his role, but terribly reduced by Ker-Orr's act:

> Inspected from this height he looked very different. I had not till then seen him on his feet. His yankee clothes, evidently cut beneath his direction by a gascon tailor, made him look as broad as he was long. His violently animated leanness imparted a precarious and toppling appearance to his architecture. He was performing a war-dance in this soft national armour just at present, beneath the sodden eyes of the proprietress. It had shuffling, vehement, jazz elements, aided by the gesticulation of the Gaul. This did not seem the same man I had been talking to before. He evidently, in this enchanted hotel, possessed a variety of personalities. It was not the same man. Somebody else had leapt into his clothes--which hardly fitted the newcomer--and was carrying on his quarrel. The original and more imposing man had disappeared. I had slain him.[36]

Travelling to Pontaisandra several days later Ker-Orr is astonished to again encounter his "enemy" still affecting the American role: "I recognized this figure fragmentarily--first, with a cold shudder, I recognized an excrescence of hair; then with a jump I recognized a hat held in its hand; then, with an instinctive shrinking, I realized that I had seen these flat traditional pseudo-american shoulders before. With a really comprehensive throb of universal emotion, I then recognized the whole man."[37] The opportunity for ultimate victory later presents itself in the persons of three genuine American acquaintances whose dialect Ker-Orr relishes, but whose attire might have been even more distinctive: "However, I measured with enthusiasm their egregious breadth of shoulder, the exorbitance of their 'pants.' I examined with some disappointment these signs of nationality. How english they looked, compared to de Valmore. They were by no means american enough for my taste. Had they appeared in a star-stripe swallow-tail suit like the cartoons of Uncle Sam, I should not have been satisfied."[38] Ker-Orr's plan is to unmask de Valmore by confronting him with his authentic American friends. This final blow is delivered the same evening, and it achieves a satisfying triumph for Ker-Orr: "His racial instinct was undergoing the severist revolution it had yet known. An incarnation of sacred America herself had commanded him to take me to his bosom. And, as the scope of my victory dawned upon him, his personal mortification assumed the proportions of a national calamity. For the first time since the sealing of his citizenship he felt that he was only a Frenchman from the Midi--hardly as near an American, in point of fact,as is even a poor god-forsaken Britisher."[39]

The other stories collected in The Wild Body are composed primarily of personality clashes that are exercises in the perception of the absurd. In "Beau Séjour" Ker-Orr is a witness to the wild antics carried on within Mademoiselle Péronnette's pension. The triumph this time is not Ker-Orr's, but that of a Russian called Zoborov who gains a victory over Mademoiselle Peronnette. Although on one occasion Mademoiselle Péronnette calls Zoborov "a dirty moujik," she has sheltered him simply because he has domesticated himself in her pension like a yawning and tyrannous cat. When Ker-Orr arrives at the pension she mistakes him for another one of the many Poles who have found refuge in country inns. At first sight Zoborov seems to mirror the image of the typical Pole except for the fact that he always makes up to French visitors. That he has a capacity for extending himself, however, soon becomes apparent. Ker-Orr observes the way in which he enlarges himself by superimposing on himself the "visionary contours" of his friend, another Russian who, he says, is serving with the Foreign Legion in Africa:

> He repeated long dialogues between his friend and himself. When it came to his friend's turn to speak, he would puff his chest out, and draw him-

> self up, until the penumbra of visionary and supernatural flesh that always accompanied him was almost filled by his own dilated person. He would assume a debonair recklessness of manner. . . . His gestures would be those of an open-handed and condescending prince. He would ostentatiously make use of the personal pronoun 'thou' (in his french it had a finicky lisping sound), to make one eager to get on such terms with him oneself.[40]

Zoborov has managed to assume a 'gascon' frown, Ker-Orr observes, and has established himself as the moral conscience of the pension. He still hides himself, on occasion, under the guise of the humble Pole, or the gallant moujik, however. The latter role is assumed when he turns the party to celebrate the partnership of Mademoiselle Péronnette and Carl into an "all-russian" occasion.

Ker-Orr does not realize Zoborov's real intentions until he sees Zoborov a year after this particular celebration at a Breton Pardon. This time he spies Zoborov in the middle of a group of "fellow peasants" in their "best sabots and finest flat black hats."[41] Zoborov is now "dressed completely as a breton peasant in black cloth a half-inch thick, of the costliest manufacture,"[42] and he announces "I'm en breton now, you see!"[43] Ker-Orr learns that he has presided over the downfall of Mademoiselle Péronnette and Carl, and is now the proprietor of Beau Séjour. As proprietor he has now cast off his role as parasitic Pole or Russian moujik. Ker-Orr notes the "newness and stiffness of the Breton fancy dress, the shining broadcloth and velvet, combined with the noticeable filling out of his face,"[44] that advertises his success. Although Ker-Orr has not been a party to the success, he gleefully celebrates the triumph: "I was rather richly dressed at the time, and I was glad. I ordered for the great 'peasant' and his satellites another bottle of the ceremonious cider."[45]

Bestre, the subject of another story, fascinates Ker-Orr because he also engages in the game of unmasking. Like Ker-Orr, Bestre makes a stalking-horse of his own appearance in order to promote a confrontation with anyone entering his domain:

> At the passing of an enemy Bestre will pull up his blind with a snap. There he is, with his insult stewing lusciously in his yellow sweat. The eyes fix on the enemy, on his weakest spot, and do their work. He has the anatomical instinct of the hymenopter for his prey's most morbid spot; for an old wound; for a lurking vanity. He goes into the other's eye, seeks it, and strikes. On a physical blemish he turns a scornful and careless rain like a garden hose. If the deep vanity is on the wearer's back, or in his walk or gaze, he sluices it with an abundance you would not expect his small eyes to be capable of delivering.[46]

Ker-Orr actually gains the upper hand in his first encounter with Bestre when he surprises him with a penetrating stare delivered through the window of his kitchen. Bestre quickly recovers, however, and Ker-Orr suffers a visual blow that makes him waver. During his stay at Kermanac Ker-Orr is witness to, or hears reports from Bestre about, skirmishes in which he has succeeded in penetrating the shell of an opponent. Ker-Orr admits that he "learnt a great deal" from Bestre. "He is," he says, "one of my masters."[47]

The Breton circus in "The Cornac and his Wife" provides Ker-Orr with an opportunity to observe a conflict between subjective personalities and the superimposed roles through which they normally act. Witnessing an initially routine performance, Ker-Orr observes the showman extend himself beyond the restrictions of his conventional role in an intellectual banter with the clown. And later in the show a spontaneous eruption of critical intelligence from a customarily disciplined peasant-boy disrupts the mechanical operation of a traditionally ritual performance. Both showman and clown are nonplussed. Ker-Orr is delighted by the startling scene he witnesses when suddenly a genuine personality comes to the surface from beneath the role or mask within which it is normally contained.

In "Franciscan Adventures" Ker-Orr is once again the antagonist as he encounters a man whose "inferior religion" is his questionable musical talent. Coming upon Father Francis's bragging performance before some children, Ker-Orr decides to "stop and interrogate this shell."[48] When Father Francis notices him Ker-Orr presents a broad smile showing him his "big, white, expensive teeth, in perfect condition."[49] Further provocation is offered by his attire: "He was repelled by my shabby appearance, I saw. I opened my coat and showed him a rich coloured scarf. I smiled again, slowly and hypnotically, offering to his dazzled inspection the dangling scarf."[50] Offering him a cigarette, Ker-Orr presents still more bait: "He eyed my luxurious new morocco cigarette case. He perceived the clean, pink shirt and collar as I drew it out."[51] Ker-Orr is, of course, seeking to fascinate Father Francis in order to draw him out. Ker-Orr's ruthlessly penetrating analysis of the man results in the conclusion that his existence is totally dominated by his enthusiasm for the "bad, late, topical sentimental songs of Republican France."[52] Ker-Orr leaves him after he is satisfied that his explanation has "accounted completely" for the essence of Father Francis.

His interest in the "chemistry of personality" and its visual manifestations, from which these early stories were born, is evident throughout Lewis's fiction. In Rude Assignment he recalls that he continued in all his subsequent work to develop the thinking he had begun when he made notes for The Wild Body: "My literary career began in France, in the sense that my first published writings originated in notes made in Brittany. Indeed, this period in retrospect, responsible for much, is a blank with regard to painting. . . . But what I started to do in Brittany I have been developing ever since. Out of Bestre and Brotcotnaz grew, in that sense--if in no other--the aged 'Gossip Star' at her toilet, and Percy Hardcaster."[53] The characters of Lewis's fiction do indeed proceed from his early creations in the sense that they are studies in the infinite variety of ways in which the human personality clothes itself.

CHAPTER THREE

ROLE AS GARMENT IN THE THEATRE OF THE WORLD

> And what is all this life but a kind of comedy, wherein men walk up and down in one another's disguises and act their respective parts, till the property-man brings them back to the attiring house. And yet he often orders a different dress, and makes him that came but just now off in the robes of a king put on the rags of a beggar. Thus are all things represented by counterfeit, and yet without this there was no living.[1]

The world as a stage

The metaphor of the world as a stage has been a familiar image since the earliest existence of the theatre, but its frequency in the literature of a particular period may reflect something of the spirit of the times. Herbert Weisinger, in The Agony and the Triumph. Papers on the Use and Abuse of Myth, describes the three principal expressions of the image and the attitudes they reflect, citing examples primarily from the late renaissance when the metaphor was, he says, an "intellectual commonplace." The first type is that in which man is the mere spectator of the glory of God's creation. The second type puts man onto the stage as an active player in the drama of life and adds the sombre element of time, as in Jacques famous speech in As You Like It. Both of these uses of the concept reaffirm the assumption that the world is an orderly place under the control of a divine intelligence, although the second lacks the easy confidence of the first. The third use of the metaphor, involving a shift in attitude, rejects belief in the orderly system that is central to the first ~~two~~ types, and ultimately denies any significance to human existence: "Life's but a walking shadow; a poor player/ That struts and frets his hour upon the stage. . . ." The resurgence of the metaphor in the late renaissance, like its revival in modern literature (in the theatre of the absurd, for example) is often symptomatic of scepticism or even a sense of futility, Weisinger believes.

Given very much thought, Weisinger says, the metaphor is a discomforting one in any context because the illusion it supports is maintained by reference to an art form that is itself dependent on a host of illusions--"the representation of a contrived action on a raised platform by impersonators who speak an uncommon language in an artificial space-time continuum within a building deliberately designed to heighten that illusion through the devices of lighting, scenery, music, costume, makeup, distance, and seating arrangement. . . ."[2] The image of the theatrum mundi, Weisinger believes, is most often employed by artists to intentionally blur the distinction between reality and illusion in order to encourage a fresh examination of the human condition.

The concept of the world as a stage is a familiar one in the social sciences as well as in literature. Role-analysis is a currently popular method of investigation in sociological and psychological studies. In The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life, Erving Goffman describes all social encounters as dramatic performances that are made up, like those in the theatre, of a controlled relationship between actors, setting, and audience. Through the playing of established roles "in everyday life," Goffman says, the fundamental need for order in human relationships is satisfied to some degree. Robert Park in Race and Culture recognizes role-playing as a common characteristic of human behavior that is a positive reflection of the underlying personality: "It is probably no mere historical accident that the word person, in its first meaning, is a mask. It is rather a recognition of the fact that everyone is always and everywhere, more or less consciously, playing a rôle. We are parents and children, masters and servants, teachers and students, clients and professional men, Gentiles and Jews. It is in these rôles that we know each other; it is in these rôles that we know ourselves."[3] This realistic attitude (as opposed to the romantic decrying of all roles or masks as merely counterfeit) is found also in comments by George Santayana.

For Santayana masks are "glorious things" that make tangible the otherwise obscure forces of nature: "It will never do for a mind merely to live through its passions or its perceptions; it must discern recognizable objects, in which to centre its experience and its desires; it must choose names and signs for them, and these names and symbols, if they are to perform their function in memory and intercourse, must be tightly conventional."[4] Without objective manifestation, Santayana continues, life would be merely a series of indistinguishable fragments: "What is not covered in this way by some abiding symbol can never be recovered; the dark flood of existence carries it down bodily. Only in some word or conventional image can the secret of one moment be flashed to another moment; and even when there is no one ready to receive the message, or able to decipher it, at least the poet in his soliloquy has uttered his mind and raised his monument in his own eyes; and in expressing his life he has found it."[5]

Role as garment

All of these observations about role-playing and mask relate to Lewis's work. The extent to which his novels and short stories are filled with characters described in the act of playing roles indicates that the image of the theatre, like the concept of clothing, was prominent in his consciousness. Lewis's preoccupation with role-playing proceeds directly from the theory of personality described in The Wild Body in which the basic energies of life are pictured as manifesting themselves through a veneer of secondary substance. A role is easily seen in this context as a form of garment or shell that is composed in the process of self-expression. Role-playing is, indeed, inevitable, if it is recognized as a function of the absurdity that characterizes human existence. It is only through masks or roles that life is given objective expression and, in Lewis's view, it is only through these forms that it may be interpreted: thus, to dress is to address, to cover is to discover.

Lewis's use of the theatrum mundi as metaphor is both an expression of reality and a satiric device (In Lewis's view, the two are commonly synonymous since, as he says in several books, satire is most often an expression of the objective truth). Role players in Lewis's fiction include those whose masks dramatize qualities that are totally foreign to them, as well as those who manifest a relatively authentic exterior. Ultimately, of course, the clear distinction between authentic and inauthentic is as difficult to determine in the actions of fictional characters as it is in the actions of living people. Lewis does what Weisinger believes most artists do in employing theatrical images; that is, he encourages the reader to re-examine the nature of human existence.

In the performance of a role the actor's principal resources are visual and auditory. He projects his personality visually by means of his physical appearance, clothing, and gesture. But he also clothes his personality audibly by the words he uses and the manner in which he speaks them. Even laughter may be seen as a manifestation or clothing of the self. All of these aspects of role-playing are explored extensively in Lewis's fiction.

Lewis's interest in the surface of existence included an interest in language as a form of clothing. The characters of his fiction are often delineated by what might be called their wordrobes--the manner in which their minds are externalized through the language they speak. Dan Boleyn of The Apes of God is painfully inarticulate: "Dan longed for the gift of words (enjoyed in such a superlative degree by all his relatives, with whom speech was abundant and continuous--all their thoughts clothing themselves in words so that they spoke them aloud all the time, with great volubility. . . ."[6] The Bailiff of Childermass, on the other hand, has an incredible wordrobe that allows him to equip himself in the language of diverse types, from that of the child ("Scoose my little language") to that of the sententious orator ("the characteristic incandescence of our infernal neighbor").

Words themselves are clothed even further by eccentricities of pronunciation, and Lewis's work emphasizes that this aspect of language in English society is often more important than the words themselves. Alan Hobson is described by Tarr as a "voice culture practitioner," M. de Valmore's chief weapon is his American accent, and Sean O'Hara seeks to elevate his social status by putting on an upper-class accent. The Bailiff, again, has a diabolical facility for adopting the accent of any group he wishes to exploit.

The Vulgar Streak

In *The Vulgar Streak* Lewis presents a character who has made his very existence dependent upon the maintenance of a role that is, in the beginning at least, totally foreign to his personality. Vincent Penhale directs his energies almost exclusively into sustaining the image of himself as a member of the English upper class. The novel clearly proceeds from Lewis's analysis of John Bull in *The Mysterious Mr. Bull*, written approximately three years earlier. The figure of the socially ideal English gentleman in Lewis's fiction appears as early as Hobson in *Tarr*, whose character-in-capsule anticipates the much later creation of Vincent Penhale.

Although much of *The Mysterious Mr. Bull* is written in a humorous tone, Lewis does not conceal his deep repugnance for the class system in England. "I would for my own part," he says, "far rather have been born a straight slave, in a Greek or Roman city-state, than have been born a member of the British working-class"[7] For the past few decades, he explains, the upper class has been an increasingly false estate because it has lost almost entirely its former basis in land, tradition, and birth. In place of these things a prestigious education has been substituted to maintain this "bogus aristocracy": "The great Public Schools turn out every year the necessary number of 'gentlemen,' as far as possible equipped with a booming B.B.C. voice, a jealous esprit de corps, and an 'upper-class' team spirit, that would be worthy of a Junker caste."[8]

The "gentlemanly" class has an invaluable asset, Lewis says, in its incredible capacity for style. Lord Chesterfield's famous affirmation of the value of "the graces" above all else is an expression of its importance. Style, Lewis explains, is not, however, a reflection of the quality of what is being done, but refers only to the manner in which it is done. It is, then, a technique of clothing that in England, Lewis says, is often intended to conceal what is inferior: "As a veneer of languor--as a trick, for evading the issue--as a receipt for passing-off ignorance and laziness as ability and judgement--we are all familiar with its manifold uses and abuses, among us: once we know what we are looking for, we can find traces of it everywhere, and how often, alas, do we not discover it to be a hideout for the inferior, a gilding for the dull-but-born-to-foxhunt, or an infallible technique for the intellectual counterfeiter."[9] On the social plane, the Englishman's flair for style emerges in a great many ways. Savile Row attests to his accomplishments in the area of men's clothing, for example. But outweighing all other manifestations of style, and contributing most to the maintenance of the class-system, is the "gentlemanly" manner of speech. The efforts of any individual to assume the advantages of the superior class are nullified if he cannot display the proper accent, "for speech is where the branding occurs at birth--upon _the tongue_; the social death warrant is uttered every time the poor victim opens his mouth to speak. . . ."[10]

As attractive as certain aspects of the Englishman's social style might seem, Lewis observes, one must realize that this attractiveness has been achieved at great expense. What has taken place is a process of "excavation," Lewis posits, during which an attractive shell has been composed through the wasting of a great deal of intellectual energy, leaving only a vacuum within. It is difficult, therefore, Lewis reflects, to feel anything but aversion for the prestigious style upon which the class system depends.

Lewis has dramatized in the character of Vincent Penhale the painful conflicts that arise in a sensitive individual who attempts to overcome the inequalities of the class system. In his "confession" to Martin Penny-Smythe early in the novel

Penhale gives an impassioned explanation of what it means to be born into the working class: "In that free land, to which we both belong, I was born unfree, because I was born of working people. I was born so that I could not lift up my eyes without circumspection to look in the face of a member of the master-class. That educational system, so cunningly devised for the underdog, saw to it that I should continue to speak with an accent that branded me as an inferior."[11] In order to overcome the disadvantages of his birth, he tells Martin, he has simply trained himself to look and act like a member of the privileged class. Having been, as he puts it, "denuded of every advantage," he had taken it upon himself to acquire the proper equipage of a gentleman so that he could usurp the role of his social superiors. The idea had come to him initially when he realized that his father dressed in formal attire looked surprisingly distinguished. And so, like Dickens' Pip, his first act in becoming a gentleman was to procure the proper clothing. It was only later that he discovered the fundamental importance of speech: "Last of all I understood about my voice: that was the last and worst of my evil discoveries how the way in which I spoke my mother-tongue, however much I might disguise myself in beautiful clothes, would betray me. When I first understood that, I did see red. I could have bitten my tongue out when I realized that every time I opened my mouth I advertised my 'humble station.'"[12] Through a great deal of effort, Vincent says, he finally developed the proper manner of speaking: "I taught myself to speak and act like this. As you see me doing, in this beautiful and polished way. Now I speak the same language as you. Once I spoke another tongue almost."[13]

Vincent considers the social world to be a stage upon which he plays the role of the ideal English gentleman. It is fortunate, as he observes himself, that he has in his composition the talents of an actor to assist him in projecting the necessary image (He has, in fact, had some association with dramatic companies, taking parts in several plays, and designing costumes for seventeenth-century dramas). On certain occasions the theatricality of Vincent's action becomes obvious, however. April Mallow observes at their first meeting that there is "something of the player" evident in his "gallant and smiling" demeanor: "April was reminded of a scene upon a beach, at a south coast watering place, when she was a child. It was a beach minstrel, it amused her to realize, that had been brought to mind by this elegant young man. It must have been the way he was standing, she told herself--as if making his bow to an audience!"[14] Although Vincent's actions on such occasions are too manifestly theatrical, his attire is always rigidly conventional: "If Penhale's manner of presenting himself was exotic or exaggerated, reminiscent of the footlights, there was nothing in his way of dressing that departed so much as a fraction from the norm of English restraint. He was extremely elegant, but with that austere refusal to admit the claims of the imagination that distinguishes only the very best English tailor."[15] In addition to his mastery of the correct style of speech, Vincent prides himself on having acquired certain other refinements such as a flair for punning, which he tells April is a mark of good breeding. He has also acquired a reputation as an "exceptional conversationalist." Victor has, then, through a combination of inherent talent and an admirable determination, succeeded in acquiring all the visual and audible resources of the role he desperately desired to play. Even his Christian name, as both he and April observe, is appropriate to his social success.

Early in the novel, however, in the course of his "confession" to Martin, Vincent discloses the effect his triumphant role-playing has had on his character. His portrayal has been so intense, he tells Martin, that he has virtually become the character: "The actor who plays all the time the Prince of Denmark, in the end is more Hamlet than anything else. I am by now what I seem."[16] But the successful manufacture of a social mask has been achieved at the expense of his personal identity: "I am a sham person from head to foot. I feel empty sometimes, as if there were nothing inside me. I lied to you at once when I first met you. I began building up a false image of another man than myself. Of someone who was not there. For I am not here. It is not I who am here. And ever since in my intercourse with you I lived inside that empty shell that I began to manufacture. . . . But of course at present it is second-nature until I hardly know which is the real man."[17] The process is precisely that described by Lewis with reference to Mr. Bull's formation of an attractive but empty shell through the wasting of all intellectual energy.

The shell image is employed effectively in the novel to describe the make-up of Vincent's personality, as in the passage quoted above. At the beginning of their intimate conversation Martin visualizes Vincent as an oyster that is beginning to open up. Later in the narrative Vincent agrees to submit himself to the analysis of a psychiatrist who Mrs. Mallow assures him will "turn him inside out." But Vincent's sense of emptiness is only confirmed by Mr. Perl: "The effort demanded of you," he says, "consumed all your energies. You are rather empty, Vincent."[18] It is a sense of despair at having consumed himself in the effort to imitate something that, as Perl points out, is empty itself, that leads to Vincent's suicide.

In addition to the powerful satire directed against the injustices and artificiality of the class system, The Vulgar

Streak contains a unique exploration of role as garment or shell. The character of Vincent Penhale shows that a role may be a positive extension of the self only to a limited degree, after which it can crystallize into a restricting and self-consuming parasite. The role-player then becomes the victim of his own creation. Role-playing may be seen also as a process of mechanization that ultimately reduces the player to the status of a mere puppet. In The Wild Body Lewis speaks of certain characters of fiction as essentially mechanical figures given over to some particular "inferior religion": "Boswell's Johnson, Mr. Veneering, Malvolio, Bouvard and Pécuchet, the 'commissaire' in Crime and Punishment, do not live; they are congealed and frozen into logic, and an exuberant hysterical truth. They transcend life and are complete cyphers, but they are monuments of dead imperfection. Their only significance is their egoism."[19] Vincent Penhale's crisis consists in having made himself over so completely in the image of an ideal figure that he is nothing without it.

Two short stories, written in the nineteen-fifties, deal with the problem of the public mask that is inevitably imposed on anyone receiving public recognition. Throughout his career Lewis insisted that the artist must always be uncompromising in the maintenance of his individuality and freedom of expression. There is a constant danger, he warned, that the talents of a man of intellect will decline if he allows his public image to affect his judgement.

"Doppelgänger"

"Doppelgänger" deals with an American poet who has had a romantic image built up around him, and who conducts his life in accord with this image. In an unusual and perhaps unnecessary introduction Lewis presents a discussion between the author and his editor about the significance of the story. The editor, an "undergraduate debater" from Oxford with an accent that is "fruity and faultless," assumes that because the subject of the story, Thaddeus Trunk, is a "smart alec" who promotes the public image of himself, he is necessarily a counterfeit artist. This mistaken interpretation gives the author the opportunity to explain that Thaddeus "thoroughly deserves his great reputation and is a smart-alec,"[20] and that his story is about that combination. Whenever an individual becomes very prominent, he explains, especially if he is "highbrow or intellectual," the public creates an ideal image of him and he is to some degree "transformed into a kind of public statue. . . ."[21] The danger to the subject of this deification is that he may jeopardize his talent by allowing this image to influence his work. Thaddeus Trunk, the author says, has succumbed to the appeal of playing the role created for him by his public. "He wishes to live his publicity figure. There it is inside his house--in his bedroom, in his bed, a publicity-figure, not a real man. So when is he ever the poet? He should drive out this publicity interloper and if he does not, someone else should."[22]

In the story itself the famous poet, who calls himself "Uncle Thad" or "Papa Thad," is found occupying an enormous house in the mountains of Vermont:

> For ten years he has been dying. Fur-capped, with leather leggings, and inflated to an impressive bulk in a short overcoat, lamb-skin-lined, collared and lapelled with cloth as stiff and thick as the bark of a plane tree, photographs of him sitting and milking his favorite goat Gianetta, spitting blood of course (glaring down toughly at the sight of the manly colour of his bloodstream), though it is asserted by those who have stopped up at the Camp Trunk with the Master that he has not had a haemorrhage for years--these photographs circulate in literary circles, from Montparnasse to Mexico City. And his reputation grows year by year, as he dies and dies, and spits and spits. He is photographed among icy peaks, alpenstock in hand, the white beard frostily bristling, as high above other men as it is romantically possible to get in the U.S.: that is the star photograph.[23]

Trunk involves himself in offering his prestigious advice and encouragement to countless numbers of aspiring poets and playing the heroic role of the dying artist. And so he has become a victim of publicity, content to expend his energy to support a mask that continues to absorb his talent rather than to seek the isolation that the narrator insists is essential to the creation of first-rate art.

The story concludes with the replacement of Thaddeus in the affections of Stella by the mysterious guest possessed of qualities that Thaddeus has allowed to atrophy or possesses only by reputation. Thaddeus exists for some time on the strength of his public image, but as that wains the traces of the poet that were left are found to have finally dissipated: "Only a shadow, a shell, remained upon the mountain. In the mountain mists a bulky phantom of publicity like one of those oversize garish posters which are so repulsively familiar continued to milk a goat there, and to spit imaginary blood. But, bit by bit, this advertisement figure evaporated, and there was nothing left at all of the one-time poet who had been devoured by that Moloch, the Public."[24]

"The Room Without a Telephone"

In "The Room Without a Telephone" Lewis presents another character whose personality is governed by the playing of a role. Like Thaddeus Trunk, Dr. Paul Eldred has been a man of genuine intellectual accomplishment, but, again like Trunk, he has allowed his public image to rule his consciousness. Eldred is a well-known historian who expends more energy in the promotion of his name than he does in the pursuit of his discipline: "Names are nourished with Gossip as plants are with manure, and Names can grow great big Names in an atmosphere of hot air too. He was a hard-boiled gardener, engaged in the cultivation of a certain Name. He had long ago realized that the manufacture of gossip was of far greater importance than the writing of history."[25]

There are a number of aspects to the role of "the great man" as played by Eldred. In advancing his reputation as a man of wit and judgement he tries to duplicate the image of Dr. Johnson. Relishing the opportunity to make public comments about anything that attracts his attention, he makes his voice as deep as possible to give an added degree of power to his weighty pronouncements. He also attempts an alteration of his appearance when he puts on the Johnsonian image, as when he is questioned by the reporter in the hospital: "But he had become more lumbering and Johnsonian every moment. Though his frame lacked flesh, he *felt* bulky in his voluminous dressing-gown, so had started rolling from side to side as Boswell described his Master as prone to do."[26] Part of his role consists in making himself appear to be old and weary in order to increase the atmosphere of reverence surrounding his personality. This technique may have had its origin, it is suggested, in the following way: "When young, Eldred developed a sensitive dread of ageing. His was a feminine make-up. In order to forestall the dreadful moment (and rob it of its sting) when people would whisper 'Old Paul is getting on', he began acting old while still a young man. But if this was the true account, the mannerisms had become second-nature."[27] Privately, Dr. Eldred welcomes every opportunity for contact with the press, and he relishes the considerable "highbrow following" he has managed to attract. In the presence of an audience, however, he plays the exhausted scholar continually disrupted from his great work by the demands of the public. The matting that has been installed on his office wall, he explains to Evan Jones, is intended to prevent the sound of the telephone from disturbing him. And so, when he is told that his hospital room will not have a telephone, his immediate reaction of horror is quickly concealed by a feigned enthusiasm for privacy: "He recovered himself so swiftly . . . that the transition was hardly perceptible by which he reintegrated his factitious self."[28] Eldred is assisted in his role by Miss Cosway, who has absorbed in her function as secretary some of the mannerisms of her employer. In answering the many letters that Eldred pretends to eschew, she has adopted the tone of his style: "Into her epistolary style had crept the weariness of a long-suffering recluse, and she relished greatly mirroring his pomposity."[29] Miss Cosway is an enthusiastic extension of Eldred as the venerable sage.

The origin of Dr. Eldred can be seen in the undeveloped character of Loundes in Tarr who puts himself forward as a vigorous cubist painter, but who in truth is rather idle:

> He was extremely proud of being interrupted in his work, for Loundes' 'work' was a serious matter, a very serious matter indeed. He 'found

> great difficulty in working'; always he implied that you did not. He suffered from a form of persecution mania as regards his 'mornings.' To start with, it was plain, from what he said, that he was very much in request: people, seemingly, were always attempting to get into his room: such was the fatal attraction he exercised.[30]

After only a short time in the hospital, in the absence of a receptive audience, Eldred abandons his familiar mask: "Almost regenerated in his present isolation, Eldred even came to look ten years younger. Having climbed out of that Cigar Store Indian, the Great Dr. Eldred, having found, by accident, a place where it was impossible to be that anyhow, he lay in his bed an undressed personality, as it were."[31] Eldred becomes fascinated, however, with the atmosphere of the hospital and personality of the nuns who operate it. The place seems to recreate the environment of the fifteenth or sixteenth centuries, but it is the behavior of the nuns that is most surprising to the patient. Conditioned to receiving the attention accorded a celebrity, Eldred is greatly impressed by the attitude of detachment exhibited by every one of the nuns. They go about their duties with mechanical precision, treating the patients with a disarming aloofness. And as if to accentuate this attitude they have developed the peculiar habit of interlocking their fingers in front while twirling their thumbs around each other. Eldred's infatuation leads inevitably to his appropriation of the nuns' techniques. He begins to adopt a pose of indifference toward the person with whom he is speaking, and he practices twirling his thumbs under the bed-clothes. After his release, which he resists as long as possible, he re-creates his whole environment in imitation of the nursing home. The house is redecorated, with black as the predominant colour, religious works of art are hung on the walls, Miss Cosway is dressed in a black uniform, and the former bustle of the place is reduced to relative tranquility. When Evan Jones visits his friend he finds himself in conversation with a man who looks at him as though he was transparent and who twirls his thumbs vigorously in an attitude of complete detachment.

"The Room Without a Telephone" explores again the concept of role as clothing. The process by which Dr. Eldred changes from Dr. Johnson to the self-abstracted recluse is visualized as a stripping off of the old image, and a subsequent putting on of a new one. Various aspects of the environment--the atmosphere of the hospital and the furnishing of Eldred's home--are shown to contribute to the clothing of the role.

Snooty Baronet

In Snooty Baronet, more than in any other novel, Lewis focuses on the mechanical aspects of human existence. As a satirical device he employs as narrator a dedicated behaviorist whose concentration is fixed on the physical aspects of human behavior. Snooty readily perceives with an ingrained contempt the apparently automatic responses of his "specimens," referring to Humph, for example, as a "puppet" and a "lousy little automaton." The episode involving the advertising puppet, however, constitutes an ironic epiphany in which Snooty suddenly recognizes, when he compares the startlingly human-like actions of the puppet with his own appearance and movements, that he is largely mechanical himself. Snooty's artificial leg and silver-plated skull, as well as his rumbling stomach and frequent yawning, further accentuate the mechanical nature of his body.

Role-playing is a form of mechanization through the imposition of rigid controls on behavior. Snooty is very much aware of this phenomenon in himself and others as he is with any form of external manifestation. One of his favorite activities, he says, is adopting the personality of another person, although it is sometimes difficult to overcome the strength of his own personality: "There is scarcely anything I enjoy so much as imagining myself for a short while other people. I do not mind if they are quite unimportant. But for preference I take up a man with a name, that is only natural. According to the classical canons of acting I suppose I should be second-rate. For there are only a few parts that suit me. No one knows better than myself that for that profession at least I have too much personality. This does not prevent me from acting however."[32] Snooty finds playing the role of Samuel Butler particularly attractive. His techniques in this role include the putting on of a particular smile as well as an affected laugh, and the use of certain verbal exclamations ("Oh ah!") that he believes were characteristic of Butler. He often plays Butler when he visits Val, he says, as on the evening first described in the narrative, when she is a willing participant in the game: "We were an old married couple, sat down at the table--brooding and eating. I'm bound to say I felt very Butlerish! Several times I had broken into the Butler smile and Val had remarked it and shied away or tossed her head. She was playing up fine. It was almost as if she hadn't known my name, and as if we had done this together for a decade."[33] Later on the same evening, in an effort to "humour" Val during one of her melancholy moods, Snooty takes on another role, employing, he says, "the seductive mannerisms of what I supposed to be the Male Nurse."[34] In recalling his history up to the present Snooty says he has played two major roles that have been imposed on him from without. After a literary critic compared the "behaviorist specimens" of his first book, People Behaving, with pictures by Rousseau, he became "the Douanier" to his reading public. The public image of "the Douanier" was replaced by the Baronet when Snooty received his title, and he is now attempting to rid himself of the latter because he finds such roles too restricting: "Such abstractions as The Custom House Officer and The Baronet had overshadowed my personal life, that was the fact of the matter, to such a point that I could no longer call my soul my own."[35] Snooty prefers to choose his own roles.

Snooty is an effective role-player because he can view with complete objectivity the external behavior of himself as well as that of others. And he can allow himself to perform virtually any act, regardless of the effect on other people, by maintaining the pose of the detached observer of his own body. The cold-blooded murder of Humph is described as merely the pleasurable response to a momentary impulse. For Snooty, role functions as a protective mask that enables him to remain comfortably detached and anonymous.

Snooty's mistress, Valerie, is also a consummate role-player whose every action, as described by Snooty, is played to a real or imagined audience. Her role is that of "the so-much-sought-after-girl-of-fashion,"[36] and she performs it with a degree of perfection that wins Snooty's constant admiration. Her best performances are given over the telephone: "Her telephone-voice was that of the stage-impersonation of telephoning, with a dummy-telephone. And then, oh, the shattering gaiety of the mayfairish high-life drama, as arranged for the suburbs (once a day, a matinée, perhaps, and once, or perhaps two, a night). Such impeccable technique, for what of late had become such a lonely little part!"[37] The image of a shell is frequently employed in the description of Valerie's rigidly formularized appearance and behavior. Installed in her flat, with her bed and telephone the centre of her "inferior religion," she is pictured as a "bawdy hermit-crab."[38] Captivated on one occasion by her performance on the telephone, Snooty says her actions outshine those of conventional war heroes because the latter are heroes in a collective effort: "This one small adventuress was the entire crew of her cockle-shell."[39] And her refusal to pursue the matter of their mysterious excursion into Persia is described as a withdrawal into her "prim lesbo-victorian shell."[40] The use of shell imagery in describing the composition of a role once again establishes the concept of role as garment, and adds another dimension to the exploration of the mechanical that is the principal content of the novel.

The emphasis on role-playing is a distinctive feature of the characterization in Lewis's fiction, and is an expression of his constant investigation of the relationship between the subjective energies of life and the manner in which they are manifested in the commerce of everyday living. If any conclusion could be made from Lewis's use of the play metaphor it might be that, given the fundamental absurdity of human nature, existential fulfilment lies somewhere between the impossible extremes of attempting to live in complete detachment or anonymity, and giving oneself over entirely to the formation of a role.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE BOURGEOIS-BOHEMIANS AND THE APES

Tarr

In his first novel Lewis explores a number of problems with which he was struggling at the outset of his career, and which he continued to examine throughout the course of his life: the reality of appearance in human relations, the relationship between art and life, and, more immediately, the existence in society of a pseudo-artistic element which in various disguises threatened all forms of authentic artistic expression. The figures of Tarr, Kreisler, Bertha, and Anastasya objectify, perhaps for the purpose of clarification, a variety of attitudes that were important to Lewis at the time. Lesser characters such as Hobson, Butcher, and Loundes, are puppets who dramatize indefensible principles and serve merely as satiric targets. Lewis's technique in creating such victims is tantamount to that which he ascribes to Shakespeare in The Lion and the Fox in which he accuses Shakespeare of creating men of disagreeable humour for the purpose of executing them.

Tarr appeared shortly after Lewis had written most of the stories published in The Wild Body, and it is not difficult to see in the novel's world and in most of its inhabitants other examples of activity controlled in part by a form of "inferior religion," in this case "bourgeois-bohemianism."

In The Wild Body Lewis explains that his stories are based on the observations of people whose lives are directed by their fascination with some object or pursuit:

> A man is made drunk with his boat or restaurant as he is with a merry-go-round: only it is the staid, everyday drunkenness of the normal real, not easy always to detect. We can all see the ascendance a 'carousal' has on men, driving them into a set narrow intoxication. The wheel at Carisbrooke imposes a set of movements upon the donkey inside it, in drawing water from the well, that it is easy to grasp. But in the case of a hotel or fishing-boat, for instance, the complexity of the rhythmic scheme is so great that it passes as open and untrammelled life. This subtle and wider mechanism merges, for the spectator, in the general variety of nature. Yet we have in most lives the spectacle of a pattern as circumscribed and complete as a theorem of Euclid.[1]

The characters of Tarr have, by choosing to occupy the Vitelotte Quarter of Paris, put themselves into a particular environment or culture that is animated by "artistic" pursuits: "Art is being studied.--But 'art' is not anything serious or exclusive: it is the smell of oil paint, Henri Murger's Vie de Bohème, corduroy trousers, the operatic Italian model: but the poetry, above all, of linseed oil and turpentine."[2] Tarr is an examination of this culture and of the life that moves about and collides within this well-defined area: "Its rent is half paid by America. Germany occupies a sensible apartment on the second floor. A hundred square yards at its centre is a convenient space, where the Boulevard du Paradis and the Boulevard Kreutzberg cross with their electric trams: in the middle is a pavement island, like vestige of submerged masonry. Italian models festoon it in symmetrical human groups; it is also their club."[3] The largest dimensions of this specialized world of artists and pseudo-artists are measured by the Vitelotte Quarter, but within this area are particular centres of activity around, and in which, the various characters play our their roles: Bertha's flat, Fraulein Liepmann's salon, the Bonnington Club, the Restaurant Vallet.

One finds abundant evidence in Tarr of Lewis's preoccupation with dress and environment as human extensions. Virtually every character is delineated in some way by his personal attire, his abode, or the locale in which he has placed himself. In a fundamental way all the characters are attempting to define themselves in a process that involves them in the projection or destruction of images that they have inherited, adopted, borrowed, or created like the insect masks to which Lewis refers in The Caliph's Design, "to work on the psychology of their adversaries."[4] Much of the novel's action consists of encounters motivated by the desire of one person to maintain his own protective covering while seeking to get beneath the exterior of another.

The first confrontation in the novel takes place in the Boulevard du Paradis where Tarr and Hobson unavoidably converse. Their civility and condescension towards one another is a disguise concealing the genuine animosity that exists beneath the surface: "They sat for some minutes with a stately discomfort of self-consciousness, staring in front of them. It was really only a dreary boiling anger with themselves and against the contradictions of civilized life; the hatred that personal diversities engender was fermenting under the camouflage of intricate accomodations and in each other's company they were conscious of this stir."[5] The immediate source of Tarr's irritation--Hobson's incongruous appearance--is described in detail:

> This was Alan Hobson's outfit: a Cambridge cut disfigured his originally manly and melodramatic form. His father was said to be a wealthy merchant somewhere in Egypt. Very athletic, his dark and cavernous features had been constructed by nature as a lurking-place for villainies and passions: but Hobson had double-crossed his rascally sinuous body. He slouched and ambled along, neglecting his muscles: and his full-blooded blackguard's countenance attempted to portray delicacies of common sense and gossamer-like backslidings into the inane that would have puzzled any analyst unacquainted with his peculiar training. Occasionally he would exploit his criminal appearance and blacksmith's muscles for a short time, however: and his strong piercing laugh threw ABC waitresses into confusion. The art-touch, the Bloomsbury technique, was very noticeable. Hobson's Harris tweeds were shabby, from beneath his dejected jacket emerged a pendant seat, his massive shoes were hooded by the superfluous inches of his trousers: a hat suggesting that his ancestors had been Plainsmen or some rough sunny folk shaded unnecessarily his countenance, already far from open.[6]

Tarr's anger finally overcomes his restraint as he gives voice to his frustration. His verbal assault begins with a complaint about the length of Hobson's hair. His own pretension to the wearing of long hair would be legitimate, he asserts, but Hobson's is clearly fraudulent: "But why so much hair? I don't wear my hair long: if you had as many reasons for wearing it long as I have we should see it flowing round your ankles!"[7] Hobson protests innocently that his outfit poses no threat to Tarr: "I can't see why you should resent, my innocent device: however long I wore it you would not suffer, we do not compete."[8]

Lewis frequently deals in his writing with the increasingly difficult problem posed for the vast majority of distinguishing the genuine artist from the dilettante. Lewis did not consider this confusion as insignificant. He recognized it as a serious threat to the function of art as well as to the actual physical survival of those whose lives are devoted solely to creative endeavors. In *The Diabolical Principle and the Dithyrambic Spectator* Lewis refers satirically ~~to~~ the deliberate "vulgarization" of art for the benefit of the few who could afford to disguise themselves by appropriating the artist's shell, his studio space, while they masquerade as the bohemian artists whose apparent freedom from social constraint they covet for themselves: "Since the New Philistine for preference dresses like an artist, plays readily on musical instruments, lives in a studio if possible and so on--in short, since he has disguised himself as that which he wishes either to tame and to put to some vulgar use or else to destroy, in the way that the Esquimau gets under a seal-skin to hunt a seal--to dissociate these masses of sham practitioners from the real ones is particulary difficult."[9]

Hobson's naive claim for the innocence of his appearance and behavior brings an increasingly vehement reaction from Tarr, who sees in his outfit the evidence of a privileged social training married to a fashionable bohemianism that threatens to undermine genuine creative activity:

> Your proceedings possess a herdesque astuteness; in the scale against the individual weighing less than the Yellow Press yet being a closer and meaner attack. Also you are essentially *spies*, in a lousy safe and well-paid service, as I told you before: you are disguised to look like the thing it is your function to betray--What is your position? you have bought have you not for eight hundred pounds at an aristocratic educational establishment a complete mental outfit, a programme of manners: for four years you trained with other recruits: you are now a perfectly disciplined social unit, with a profound *esprit de corps*. The Cambridge set that you represent is, as observed in an average specimen, a hybrid of the Quaker, the homosexual and the Chelsea artist. Your Oxford brothers, dating from the Wilde decade, are a more muscular body: the Chelsea artists have at least no pretensions to be anything but philistine: the Quakers are powerful ruffians. You represent, my good Hobson, the *dregs* of anglo-saxon civilization: there is absolutely nothing softer upon the earth. Your flabby potion is a mixture of the lees of Liberalism, the poor froth blown off the decadent Nineties, the wardrobe-leavings of a vulgar bohemianism with its head-quarters in the suburb of Carlyle and Whistler. You are concentrated, highly-organized barley-water: there is nothing in the universe to be said for you: any efficient state would confiscate your property, burn your wardrobe--that old hat and the rest--as infectious and prohibit you from propogating.
>
> . . . .
>
> A breed of mild pervasive cabbages has set up a wide and creeping rot in the West: It is the lost

> generations described in Chekov over again, that any resolute power will be able to wipe up over-night, with its eyes shut. Your kind meantime make it indirectly a peril and tribulation for live things to remain in your neighbourhood. You are systematizing and vulgarizing the individual: you are the advance-copy of communism, a false millennial middle-class communism. You are not an individual: you have, I repeat, no right to that hair and to that hat: you are trying to have the apple and eat it too. You should be in uniform and at work, *not* uniformly *out of uniform* and libelling the Artist by your idleness.[10]

It is the selfish desire to enjoy contradictory roles that particularly galls Tarr. Having been given quite by chance the advantages of the wealthy, the members of Hobson's class wish also to play, in romantic indulgence, the role of the bohemian. In doing so they not only sacrifice whatever benefits might have accrued from their actual position in favour of a stultifying though fashionable game, but they also betray the genuine unconventionality of the true creative spirit:

> Everyone who does not contend openly and take his share of the common burden of ignominy of life is a sneak, unless it is for a solid motive. The exemption you claim is not to work in, there is no personal rationale for your privileges, you make no claim to deserve your state, only to be lucky. But against what have you exchanged your temper, your freedom, and your fine baritone voice? You have exchanged them for an old hat that does not belong to you and a shabbiness you have not merited by suffering neediness. Your untidiness is a sentimental indulgence: we should insist upon every man dressing up to his income, it should be understood that he make willy-nilly a smart *fresh* appearance.
>
> . . . .
>
> With your training you are decked in the plumes of very fine birds indeed: but what does it amount

> to, your plumes are not meant to fly with but merely to slouch and skip along the surface of the earth. You wear the livery of a ridiculous set, you are a cunning and sleek domestic: no thought can come out of your head before it has slipped on its uniform: all your instincts are drugged with a malicious languor--an arm, a respectability, invented by a group of giggling invert-spinsters who supply you with a fraudulent patent of superiority.[11]

Although Hobson's outfit is clearly deceptive by intention, Tarr observes that from another point of view it is, ironically, consistent with his actual mode of life: "The only justification for your slovenly appearance it is true is that it is perfectly emblematic."[12] The conversation ends with Tarr's reference to Baudelaire's story of the poet who instils some vigor into a beggar by beating him and willingly withstanding the retaliation. Tarr does violence instead to Hobson's hat, which serves as the symbolic object for the attitude that he has been attacking, but there is no reaction from Hobson as Tarr makes his exit.[13]

Lewis's satire is often more complex than it might at first appear. In the preceding passages Hobson is the obvious satiric target. He apparently has little with which to justify himself, and yet in a subtle way Lewis leaves the reader with misgivings about Tarr as well. In the very midst of Tarr's tirade about the pretentiousness of Hobson's attire the following brief description appears: "Tarr's white collar shone dazzlingly in the sun. His bowler hat bobbed, striking out clean lines in space as he spoke."[14] Only moments later a more detailed description of Tarr discovers him wearing "a dark morning coat whose tails flowed behind him as he walked strongly and quickly along, and curled on either side of his lap as he sat."[15] These almost casual glimpses of Tarr invite the reader to consider the authenticity of his attire as well as the authenticity of Hobson's. While there does not seem to be any suggestion of a calculated effort on his part to project some particular image, one wonders why a man seeking so vigorously to remain unconventional should appear in such formal bourgeois dress. It is not unusual to find in Lewis this kind of recoil from a satiric thrust. One is forced to consider in this instance not merely the obvious problem of intentional deceit but the possibility, indeed, of making any sort of appearance which does not categorize the person in some way.

Tarr is a young artist who has placed himself in an environment from which he wishes to remain distinct. He is in the formative, idealistic, stage of his career, seeking to keep himself free from the influences of established ideas and coteries as well as from any personal routine: "As yet he did not appear to have been modified by any sedentary, sentimental or other discipline or habit: he was at his first push in an ardent and exotic world, with a good fund of passion from a somewhat frigid climate of his own. . . .

He was experimental and modest."[16] Tarr's experiments are concerned with the relationship between art and life, in both areas of which he is relatively unsuccessful, perhaps because he always considers the two to be fundamentally antagonistic. In his enthusiasm for art he has developed an uncomfortable distaste for the common elements of daily existence. The experience of putting himself into a new studio, for example, awakens his acute sense of the psychological effect of his surroundings, for "with Tarr a new room had to be fitted into as painfully as a foot into some new and too elegant shoe."[17] This time the size is excessive--a "largish white-washed box was what he wanted, to pack himself into"[18]--and he is discomfited by thoughts of the stubborn assertions his personal belongings will make:

> The things deposited on the floor, the door finally closed upon this new area to be devoted exclusively to himself, the sheerest discomfort began to undo him. To unpack and let loose upon the room his portmanteau's squashed and dishevelled contents--brushes, photographs and books like a flock of birds flying to their respective places on dressing-table, mantelpiece, shelf or bibliotheque; boxes and parcels creeping dog-like under beds and into corners--this initial disorder taxed his character to the breaking point. The sturdy optimism shown by these inanimate objects, the way they occupied stolidly and quickly room after room, made a most disagreeable impression. Then they were packed-up things, with the staleness of a former room about them, and charged with the memories of a depressing time of tearing up, inspecting and rejecting. These sensations were the usual indigestion of Reality, from which this fastidious soul suffered acutely, without ever recognizing the cause.[19]

This passage, in variant form, occurs in the 1911 story

"Unlucky for Pringle." James Pringle, a landscape painter, experiences a sensual delight in looking at and occupying rented rooms, because in doing so he feels he is engaging in intimate contact with the personalities of the owners: "'Rooms to let' meant that a warm, obscure, and typical life--that of the letter of the rooms and her possible daughters, husband, family, and friends--was free to be entered into and peacefully invested."[20] Having moved in on the occasion related in the story, however, he feels the alarming discomfort described in the similar passage from Tarr.

Tarr's social intercourse is affected by his attempts to insulate himself in order to maintain the personal detachment he believes is so essential for his art. In doing so he manufactures protective coverings for his personality through a variety of techniques both physical and mental: "Tarr had a gauche puritanical ritual of self, the result of solitary habits. Certain observances were demanded of those approaching him, and were quite gratuitously observed in return. The fetish within--soul-dweller that is strikingly like a wood-dweller, and who was not often enough disturbed to have had the sylvan shyness mitigated--would still cling to these forms. Sometimes Tarr's crafty daimon, aghast at its nakedness, would manage to borrow or purloin some shape of covering from elegantly draped visitor."[21] When Hobson mentions his engagement to Bertha, Tarr feels exposed and uncomfortable. But he has an interesting psychological manoeuvre for regaining his cover: "Tarr was recovering gracefully from his relapse into discomfort: if ever taken off his guard he made a clever use immediately afterwards of his naïvete: he beamed upon his slip: he would swallow it tranquilly, assimilating it with ostentation to himself. A personal weakness slipped out, he picked it up unabashed, looked at it smilingly, and put it back in his pocket."[22] Most often Tarr's cloak of shyness and restraint insulates him effectively. But there are occasions, such as his meeting with Hobson, when if "hustled out of his shell," he explodes with genuine anger--"the most spontaneous thing" he possesses in coexistence with his modesty.[23] Having given release to his emotions in the attack on Hobson and remaining still unsatisfied, Tarr continues the purge in a meeting with Guy Butcher, who serves as a sounding-board for his thoughts about Bertha and marriage.

Bertha Lunken's part in the novel is at once that of a luscious object of physical gratification, and a representative of the pseudo-bohemian element occupying the Vitelotte Quarter. Both of these aspects of her character are manifested by her physical surroundings (the vegetation outside the house containing her rooms, the furnishings of her salon, her clothing) as well as her mental attitude.

The atmosphere preparatory to Tarr's visit with Bertha is pungently, almost comically, exotic and sexually suggestive. It is spring, and the sap is flowing in the trees as Tarr moves toward Bertha's, floating like a "heavy-sided drunken fish," in a tropical current. He stops along the way at a dairy to purchase saladed potatoes and at a fruiterers for strawberries.[24] As he approaches Bertha's house Tarr is enveloped by the luxuriant vegetation that appropriately encloses her abode: "The leaden brilliant green of spring foliage hung above him, ticketing innumerably the trees. In the distance, volume behind volume, the vegetation was massed, poising sultry smoke blocks from factories in Fairyland. Its novelty, fresh yet dead, had the effectiveness of an unnecessary mirage."[25]

The green hue of the exterior verdure is extended into the interior of Bertha's habitat where it combines with the standard bric-a-brac of pseudo-bohemianism to create an atmosphere that is oppressive to Tarr:

> It was a complete bourgeois-bohemian interior. Green silk cloth and cushions of various vegetable and mineral shades covered everything, in mildewy blight. The cold repulsive shades of Islands of the Dead, gigantic cypresses, grottoes of teutonic nymphs, had installed themselves massively in this french flat. Purple metal and leather steadily dispensed with expensive objects. There was the plaster-cast of Beethoven (some people who have frequented artistic circles get to dislike this face extremely), brass jars from Normandy, a photograph of Mona Lisa. . . .
>
> . . . .
>
> This place was cheap and dead, but rich with the same lifelessness as the trees without. These looked

> extremely near and familiar at the opened windows, breathing the same air continually as Bertha and her bilious barracks. But they were dusty rough and real.[26]

For Tarr this nest and its vivacious inhabitant are so much of a departure from the intellectual detachment of his art that in their commonplace reality they seem super-real: "It was really more serious than it looked: he must not underestimate it. It was the purest distillation of the commonplace: he had become bewitched by its strangeness. It was the farthest flight of the humdrum unreal: Bertha was like a fairy visited by him, and to whom he 'became engaged' in another world, not the real one. So much was it the real ordinary world that for him with his out-of-the-way experience it was a phantasmagoria."[27] A perusal of the salon reminds Tarr how important its contents have been in his relationship with Bertha. When he has been embraced by Bertha, he recognizes, he has been embraced by all the paraphernalia in her collection: "She had loved him with all this: he had been loved with the plaster cast of Beethoven, this gentle girl had attacked him with the Klingers, had ambushed him from the Breton jars, in a funny superficial absorbing way."[28] Bertha herself is clothed in a dressing-gown that is green, like the vegetation outside. The gown is an intimate manifestation of the various "attitudes" of her naked body because "her ample form had left the fulness of a score of attitudes all over it, in flat creasings and pencillings--like the sanguine of an Italian master in which the leg is drawn in several positions, one on top of the other."[29] The progress towards Bertha, then, is made through several layers of enveloping media that are all clearly extensions of what constitutes, in Tarr's mind, the nature of Bertha herself.

In the intercourse between Bertha and Tarr each adopts a psychological cover which the other seeks to penetrate. This calculating duplicity makes their association little more than a frustrating competition: "The confusion grew every moment. It resembled a combat between two wrestlers of approximately equal strength: neither could really win. One or other of them was usually wallowing warily or lifelessly upon his stomach while the other tugged at him, examining and prodding his carcase."[30] Tarr proudly manufactures for this occasion a cloak of "indifference" to insulate him against any demeaning contact with life. Several times during his visit he checks the strength of this pose: "Installed in the midst of this admittedly ridiculous life, he gave a hasty glance at his 'indifference' to see whether it were O.K."[31] The superficiality of Tarr's involvement stems from his wish to preserve his energies exclusively for art: "His sensual nature had remained undeveloped: his Bertha, if she had not been a joke, would not have satisfied him. Her milkmaid's physique--the oreiller de chair fraiche où on ne peut aimer--had not succeeded in waking his senses: there was no more reality in their sex relations than in their other relations. But he had never wished for that sort of reality: his intellect had conspired to the effect that his senses never should be awakened, in that crude way. . . ."[32] Tarr quite openly admits to having indulged in this relationship as a form of amusement: "I have been playing at fiancee with a certain unprincipled pleasure in the novelty, but I experience a genuine horror as the fatal consequences begin to take shape."[33] Perhaps because Tarr is so acutely self-conscious he readily attributes to the actions and appearance of others as well an underlying theatricality, as he does in the analysis of his affair with Bertha: "You for your part Bertha don't do yourself justice when you are acting. I am in the same position. This I feel acutely, no I do in fact. My ill-humour occasionally takes your direction--yours, for its part, heading in mine when I criticize your acting. We don't act well together and that's a fact; though I'm sure we should be smooth enough allies off the boards of love."[34]

In the mind of Tarr there are thoughts very much like those occupying Lewis when he wrote his theory of the Wild Body and like the experimental observations of Ker-Orr which grew into, or out of, that theory. Displaying a surprising detachment in the midst of an emotional outburst from Bertha, Tarr, considering the phenomenon of human personality, conceives the core of the self as enveloped by successive compartments of secondary substance:

> A complicated image developed in his mind as he stood with her. He was remembering Schopenhauer: it was of a chinese puzzle of boxes within boxes, or of insects' discarded envelopes. A woman had at the centre a kernel, a sort of very substantial astral baby: this brat was apt to swell--she then became all baby. The husk he held now was a painted mummy-case, say. He was a mummy-case, too. Only he contained nothing but innumerable other painted cases inside, smaller and smaller ones. The smallest was not a substantial astral baby, however, or live core, but a painting like the rest.--His kernel was a painting, in fact: that was as it should be![35]

Just as Tarr occupies himself with speculation about what is beneath her shell, Bertha seeks to discover what is at the core of Tarr's being: "As the earliest Science wondered what was at the core of the world, basing its speculations on what deepest things occasionally emerge, with violence, at its holes, so Bertha often would conjecture what might be at the heart of Tarr."[36] In spite of the attempt to keep their private emotions beneath the surface of their masks both Tarr and Bertha suffer embarrasing eruptions that leave them temporarily exposed. In Tarr's case the expulsion takes the form of laughter: "Laughter was the most apparently central substance which, to her knowledge, had uncontrollably appeared: often she had heard grumblings, quite literally, and seen unpleasant lights, belonging, she knew, to other categories of matter: but they never broke cover."[37] Lewis conceived of laughter as a "tremendously important" emotion, because it initiates from the depths of the self, independent of any secondary substance. In The Wild Body there is a list of twelve "attributes of laughter" that characterize it as the purest manifestation of the subjective self, among them:

> Laughter is the climax in the tragedy of seeing, hearing, and smelling self-consciously.
>
> Laughter is the sudden handshake of mystic violence and the anarchist.
>
> Laughter is the mind sneezing.[38]

Throughout Lewis's fiction one encounters incidents in which laughter, exploding unexpectedly from beneath the surface, illuminates for a moment the essential absurdity of the human condition.

Bertha's less sophisticated nature is uncovered through a more conventional outburst of tears: "Underneath the poor comedian that played such antics with such phlegmatic and exasperating persistence, this distressed being thrust up its trembling mask, like a drowning rat. Its finer head pierced her blunter wedge. . . . A blurting, hurrying personality rushed right up into his face. He was very familiar with it. It was like the sightless clammy charging of a bat. Humbug had tempestuously departed: their hot-house was suffering a blast of outside air."[39] Both soon recover their composure and the scene is concluded without any resolution of the problems frustrating their relationship.

Tarr's other excursion into "life" through sex is with Anastasya Vasek. Still begrudging the interference with his art, he nevertheless acknowledges the stubborn assertion of his bestial desires. He decides, however, to endeavor to secure a partner with qualities more suitable to his aesthetic tastes: "'Life' would be given a chance. Anastasya's highly artistic beauty suggested an immediate solution."[40]

Although Anastasya is less the fundamental "milkmaid" type than Bertha she nonetheless presents an image of sexually stimulating corpulence: "The upper part of her head was massive and intelligent, the middle of her body was massive and exciting, there was no animalism-out-of-place in the shape of a weight of jaw--all the weight was in the head and hips."[41] This impression is heightened by the gorgeous attire in which she appears on several occasions. She is discovered first in the Restaurant Vallet, where Kreisler is impressed by the mysterious vitality of her presence:

> She wore a heavy black burnous, very voluminous and severe; a large ornamental bag was on the chair at her side, which one expected to contain herbs and trinkets, paraphernalia of the witch, rather than powder lip-stick and mere beauty secrets. Her hat was immense and sinuous; generally her appearance implied an egotistic code of advanced order, full of insolent strategies. Beside her other women in the restaurant appeared dragged down and drained of vitality by their clothes, thought Kreisler, although she wore so much more than they did. Her large square-shouldered and powerful body swam in the fluidities of hers like a duck.[42]

And at the Liepmann house she is "bespangled and accoutred like a bastard princess or aristocratic concubine of the household of Peter the Great, jangling and rumbling like a savage raree show through abashed capitals."[43]

Anastyasya's outrageous attire serves to exaggerate an enigma with which she is struggling in her own mind. She has become aware of the fundamental absurdity inherent in the fact of her being at once a creature of considerable intelligence and a voluptuous sexual object. Her clothing, then, is merely an overt acknowledgement of the inescapable reality of her physical appeal, in the same way for example, that Father Rymer of "The Bishop's Fool" chooses to make a "great big comic virtue of necessity" by dramatizing his poverty in the wearing of unnecessarily tattered clothing: "Anastasya regarded her woman's beauty as a bright dress of a harlot; she was only beautiful for that, so why humbug? Her splendid and bedizened state was assumed with shades of humility; even her tenderness and peculiar heart appeared beneath the common infection and almost disgrace of that state."[44] Anastasya's awareness of the difficulties arising from her uncommon physical and mental attributes exemplifies the observations made by Lewis with respect to the basic nature of man's existence in The Wild Body. Man is essentially absurd, he explains, because he is a comic amalgam of intelligence and matter:

> To bring vividly to our mind what we mean by 'absurd', let us turn to the plant, and enquire how

> the plant could be absurd. Suppose you came upon an orchid or a cabbage reading Flaubert's Salambo, or Plutarch's Moralia, you would be very much surprised. But if you found a man or a woman reading it, you would not be surprised.
>
> Now in one sense you ought to be just as much surprised at finding a man occupied in this way as if you had found an orchid or a cabbage, or a tom-cat, to include the animal world. There is the same physical anomaly. It is just as absurd externally, that is what I mean.[45]

The relations between Anastasya and Tarr are frustrated by two closely related problems: a feeling of absurdity in Anastasya because of the apparent conflict between her body and mind; and the matter often foremost in Tarr's mind, the antagonism between art and life. Anastasya has donned for their eleventh meeting, an outfit that is pleasantly feminine though contradictory in its particular style: "Her coat was all in florid redundancies of heavy cloth, like a Tintoretto mantle. Underneath she was wearing a very plain dark belted smock and skirt, like a working girl, which exaggerated the breadth and straightness of her shoulders. Not to sentimentalize it, she had open-work stockings on underneath, such as the genuine girl would have worn on her night-out, at two-and-eleven-three the pair."[46] Tarr's compliment about her attire prompts the discussion of her body and its feminine adornment as a contradiction of her intellect. Anastasya complains that her sexuality makes of her a mere "show girl" and forces her to promote this image by decoration, as she does her breasts: "I have to stick frills around them even, just as pork-merchants in their shop-fronts decorate the carcasses of their sucking-pigs."[47] Tarr observes that the flesh and its decorative clothing are really complementary: "It is part of the reality is lady's underwear. . . ."[48] Acknowledging this to be the case, and having made her point about her dilemma, Anastasya proposes to suspend for the moment any further inhibiting debate. Tarr's fastidious sensibilities make him reluctant, however, and he protests, with an amusing allusion to King Lear: "It's--it's not the thing itself--." The situation here anticipates the ludicrous seduction of Dan Boleyn in The Apes of God, during which Dan repeatedly protests: "Is this hospitality" while he seeks to escape Melanie Blackwell's advances. The entire scene itself is rendered comic by the juxtaposing of intellectual dialogue with grossly sexual glimpses of Anastasya's anatomy. While she is calmly speaking of the difficulties arising from the incongruity of her mind and body she crosses her legs, exposing to Tarr's glance the upper part of her thigh: "The cold grape-bloom mauve silk stockings ended in a dark slash each against her two snowy stallion thighs which they bisected, visible, one above the other, in naked expanses of tempting undercut, issuing from a dead-white foam of central lace worthy of the Can-Can exhibitionists of the tourist resorts of Paris-by-night."[49] Further discussion is interrupted by a sumptuous meal during which Tarr expounds upon the subject of art and life.

Tarr's attitude toward art obviously proceeds from Lewis's preference for a form of art that represents the exterior as opposed to the soft, indeterminate substance that is customarily associated with "life." In Tarr's mind there is an absolute distinction between art and life. It is a fact, he explains to Anastasya, that "life is art's rival in all particulars. They are de puntos for ever and ever, you will see, if you observe closely."[50] In reply to her question about the essence of life, he replies: "Everything that is not yet purified so that it is art."[51] Explaining further, he adds: "This is the essential point to grasp: Death is the thing that differentiates art and life. Art is identical with the idea of permanence. Art is a continuity and not an individual spasm: but life is the idea of the person."[52] Tarr continues with the elaboration of a theory of art that is encountered frequently in Lewis's writings: "The armoured hide of the hippopotamus, the shell of the tortoise, feathers and machinery, you may put in one camp; naked pulsing and moving of the soft inside of life--along with elasticity of movement and consciousness--that goes in the opposite camp. Deadness is the first condition for art: the second is absence of soul, in the human and sentimental sense. With the statue its lines and masses are its soul, no restless inflammable ego is imagined for its interior: it has no inside: good art must have no inside: that is capital."[53] The unfortunate result of Tarr's theories is that they have promoted in him an intellectual distaste for things unrelated, in his mind, to art, although he seems to make little productive effort to refine his energies in favor of his ideals. The strange conclusion of the novel indicates that Tarr continues to carry on his sexual exploits while remaining uncommitted for very long, and vacillating between the "milkmaid" type (Bertha and Rose Fawcett, by whom he has three children) and more "artistic" types, like Anastasya and Prism Dirkes.

The novel's other leading protagonist, Otto Kreisler, is a "lost soul"; penniless, and apparently having little talent, he is suffering as well a feeling of estrangement from those around him. His reaction is to become, like Dostoevsky's underground man, spiteful. Yet each action he undertakes in order to assert himself and get back at the world and at fate for his ill-treatment is unsatisfying. All his actions lack authenticity: when he attempts to counteract his growing sense of obscurity by playing some part in the "drama of life" he is so conscious of what he is doing that his actions are unnatural and calculated. The pleasant excitement generated by his casual first meeting with Anastasya, for example, soon deteriorates into self-conscious anxiety: "An uncomfortable thing happened now: he realized all the possibilities of this chance acquaintanceship, plainly and cinematographically and was seized with panic. He must make a good impression."[54] The diction employed to describe Kreisler's actions, by sustaining the metaphor that life is a theatre, emphasizes the artificiality of these actions, as it does in the scene at the Bonnington Club dance where he seeks an opportunity for involvement:

> He Otto Kreisler was 'for it': he was down and out (revolutionary motif): he was being assisted off the stage by this and by that. Why did he not shout? He longed to act: the rusty machine had a thirst for action.
>
> . . . .
>
> Conventional figures of drama lacked: Kreisler had in fact got into the wrong company. But he conformed for the sake of the Invisible Audience haunting life: he emulated the matter-of-factness and aplomb that impressed him in the others: so far indeed was he successful in this that the Audience took some time to notice him--the vein of scandal running through an otherwise dull performance.[55]

The campaign he eventually wages against Anastasya and her new acquaintances is nothing more than an unsatisfying farce, as are his other exploits: his involvement with Bertha is an embarrassment; the duel with Soltyk ends in a meaningless and accidental death; and despite the duel and his attempt to give himself up he is ignored even by the police until he finally completes his divorce from human society by hanging himself.

Kreisler is first discovered at his toilet, where he is engaged in meticulous preparations: "He brushed his clothes vigorously; cleaned his glasses with the absorption and tenderness of the near-sighted. Next moment . . . he was gazing through them at his face again--brushing up whimsical moustaches over pink and pouting mouth."[56] Uninterrupted by the entrance of the art model, Suzanne, he completes his array with a carefully arranged tie: "He did not take his eyes from the glass, spotted blue tie being pinched into position by finicky finger-tips, at the end of lanky drooping hands, with extended high-held formal elbows and one knee slightly flexed."[57] As he appears first Kreisler is a tortured figure who attempts to overcome his self-conscious fears and to assert his dignity by preserving a formal attire under difficult circumstances. He has already pawned his watch and dress clothes and has made up his mind to pawn his portmanteau to redeem his "Frac." The envelope containing his monthly allowance has again failed to appear. He nevertheless attempts to maintain an air of formality that sets him apart from those who playfully adopt the fashions of bohemia: "Kreisler's military morning suit, slashed with thick seams, carefully cut hair, short behind, a little florid and bunched on the top, his german high-crowned bowler hat and plain cane, were in distinguished contrast with the Charivari of the art-fashion and uniform of The Brush in those about him, chiefly students from the neighboring art schools."[58]

Kreisler's humour is reflected in the places he occupies. His "small shell of a room" has taken on the morbid flavor that emanates from his decaying spirit: "Kreisler's room resembled a funeral chamber. Shallow ill-lighted and extensive, it was placarded with nude archaic images. These were painted on strips of canvas fastened to the wall with drawing-pins. Imagining yourself in some primitive necropolis, the portraits of the deceased covering the holes in which they had respectively been thrust, you would, pursuing your fancy, have seen in Kreisler a devout recluse who had taken up his quarters in this rock-hewn death-house."[59] It is because he himself recognizes the correspondence between this room and his deteriorating circumstances that he finds it repulsive: "Such a dead hole of a place must have some effect; to shut out innovation, scare away anything pleasant. Impossible to break this spell of monotony upon his life. And it was this room, yes, this room that cut him off from the world. . . ."[60] On another occasion he feels the confines of the room forcing him into thoughts of his own existence that he would prefer to avoid: "He sauntered from the window to the bed and back. Whenever he liked, in a sense, he could open the door and go out; but still, *until* then (and *when* would he like?) he was a poor prisoner. Outside the Mensch took some strength and importance from others: but truly, in here, he could be said to touch bottom and to realize what the Kreisler-self was, with four walls around it."[61] Escape from the anxiety engendered by the solitude of his room and his frighteningly reduced circumstances takes the form of restless wanderings about the Quarter, to Juan Soler's Academy, Liepmann's flat, or, most often, to cafes. These disoriented movements provide only temporary relief, however. Even the frantic search for money to recover his dinner-jacket provides a diversion, albeit an unpleasant one, but he finds a respite only provides for unsettling introspection:

> He went to Vallet's for dinner. During the whole day he had been in feverish hurry, constantly seeing time narrowing in upon him: now he had a sensation of intolerable leisure. The first glee at the absence of pressure had entirely passed.
>
> The useless ennui of his life presented itself to him for the thousandth time, but now with a chilly clearness. It was a very obvious fact indeed, it had waited with great calm: now it said: 'As soon as you can give me your attention--well, what are you going to do with me?' Sooner or later he must marry and settle down with this stony fact and multiply its image: things had gone too far: the fact pointed that out and he did not demur.[62]

In this mood he is driven aimlessly to Liepmann's flat rather than back to his room or to the Café: "His weakness drew him on, back into the vortex: anything at all was better than going back into that terrible colourless mood. His room, the Café, waited for him like executioners. For a time he had escaped from that world: wild horses would not drag him back, not yet. The night was young. Dressed as he was, extremely untidy, he would go to Fraulein Liepmann's flat."[63]

Kreisler is characterized as a man desperately seeking to maintain some semblance of rigid dignity in a society which is pictured as predominantly superficial. In both of the major episodes in which he is involved clothing is of significance for satiric as well as for simply comic purposes. His socially unacceptable attire becomes in his eyes a metaphor for the contempt he has already felt in the presence of the Liepmann circle, and which he experiences again when he reaches the Bonnington club. Employing his sullied apparel on that occassion as a weapon of revenge as well as a target for self-pitying abuse, he then turns to formal dress to elevate his stature in his attack on Soltyk, his rival for Anastasya.

Lewis's satiric picture of the Liepmann circle reflects his frequently stated opinions about arty congeries of bourgeois-bohemians seeking solace, excitement, or prestige usually from association with dilettantes like themselves: "Wherever you look in art-world or literary circles, you see little congeries of people huddled together and scratching each other's backs."[64] Referred to as a "female group-soul" and a "slough" the Liepmann circle epitomizes "bourgeois-bohemia" and "the uniform of The Brush": "For chief characteristic this particular bourgeois-bohemian circle had in the first plan the inseparability of its members. Should a man, joining them, wish to flirt with one particularly, he must flirt with all--flatter all, take all to the theatre, carry the umbrellas and the paint boxes, of all."[65] As individuals they are submerged in a group image, and are comically grotesque in a variety of ways. Taken as a group at this particular event, however, they are decked out in their finest, and convey the impression of a confraternity of puppets: "On this occasion it was rather on its mettle, both men and women in their several ways, dressed and annointed, as scrupulously toiletted as if this were a provincial Court. An Englishwoman who was a great friend of Fraulein Liepmann's was one of the organizers of the Bonnington Club: through her they had been invited to go there, it was upon a correct institution that they awaited, evening-suited, the word of command to march."[66] The preliminary gathering at the Liepmann's discloses another "bourgeois-bohemian interior," in which every detail is selected and arranged to project some supposed attribute of Fraulein Liepmann herself:

> The two rooms with folding doors, which formed her salon and where her guests were now gathered, had not been furnished casually or without design. The 'Concert' of Giorgione did not hang there for nothing: the books lying about had been flung down by a careful hand. Fraulein Liepmann required a certain variety of admiration: but being very energetic she had a great contempt for other people, so she drew up, as it were, a list of her attributes, carefully and distinctly underlining each: with each new friend she went over again the elementary points, as a teacher would go over with each new pupil the first steps of accidence or geography--first showing him his locker, where the rulers were put and where, when he got them dirty, he could wash his hands. She took up her characteristic attitudes, one after the other, as a model might; that is, those simplest and easiest to grasp.
>
> Her room dress and manner were a kind of chart to the way to admire Fraulein Liepmann. The different points in her Geist one was to gush about, the various scattered hints one was to let fall about her naturally rather tragic life-story, the particular way one was to regard her playing of the piano. The observant newcomer would feel that there was not a candlestick or antimacassar in the room but had its lesson for him.[67]

Kreisler's original motive for attending Liepmann's party and the dance at the Bonnington club is to pursue Anastasya, but the requirement of formal dress which he is unable to meet, along with his growing sense of resentment, magnifies the event into a campaign of self-humiliation and revenge against everyone. His shabby presence will, first of all, he imagines, invite Anastasya's contempt: "He asked nothing better: to suffer still more by her was his peculiar wish, up to the hilt, physically, as it were, under her eyes. That would be a relief from present torment. He must look in her eyes; he must excite in her the maximum of contempt and of dislike."[68] But his intention is also to strip her of all protection: "He must bare her soul. If he could insult her enough she would be bare-souled. There would the naked weibliche Seele. Then he would spit on it."[69] Before his arrival at Liepmann's he anticipates outraging the entire group by his sartorial protest and shocking behavior:

> As to the rest of the party, a sour glee possessed him at thought of their sensations by the time he had done with them; already he saw their faces in fancy, when he should ring the flat bell and present himself--old morning suit, collar none too clean, dusty boots, dishevelled head. His self-humiliation was wedded with the notion of retaliation.
>
> . . . .
>
> Kreisler did not know how he should wipe out his score, but he wanted it bigger, more crushing. The bitter fascination of suffering drew him on, to substitute real wounds for imaginary. But Society at the same time must be taught to suffer, he had paid for that.
>
> Near Fraulein Liepmann's house he rubbed his shoulder against a piece of whitewashed wall with a broad grin. He went rapidly up the wide stairs leading to the entresol, considering a scheme for the commencement of the evening. This seemed so happy that he felt further resourcefulness in misconduct would not be wanting.[70]

The first reaction at Liepmann's is as he expected: "The social effect had been instantaneous. The disordered hair, dusty boots, the white patch on the jacket had been registered by the super-bourgeois eye that they had had the good luck at the outset to encounter."[71] In addition to the visual effect of his attire, Kreisler's conversation centres on the problem of his dress in a comic and satiric parody of the formality of the circle: "Ah this life, Fraulein--this life, this life! Its accidents often separate one from one's Smokkin for days, sometimes months of Sundays--you know what I mean? One has no control over--well! Now my Smokkin bless its little silk lapels--it's a good one, I have always been accustomed to the very best--leads a very independent life: sometimes it's with me, sometimes not. It was a very expensive fashionable article. That has been its downfall."[72] The response he provokes from the group is less than satisfying, however. His desire to excite Anastasya's maximum contempt and to suffer physically, as it were, under her eyes, backfires. When he concludes that the evening has been a failure and he has been cheated of the satisfaction he anticipated, he wishes to escape. Coming upon Anastasya and Soltyk accidentally, however, he suffers an embarrassing stripping under their gaze despite his attempt to cover himself: "A consciousness of his physique beset him: the outcast feeling returned in the presence of these toffs--classinferiority-feeling beset him. He must be leisurely: he was leisurely. He thought when he stretched his hand out to take his cup of coffee that it would never reach it. He felt a crab dragged out of its hole, which was in this case perhaps the conservatory. Inactive, he was ridiculous: he had not reckoned on being watched. This was a fiasco: here he was posing nude for Anastasya and the Russian."[73] The escapade is finally concluded with a shocking insult to the hostess followed by a hasty departure.

Kreisler's last desperate attempt to assert himself in order to gain some personal recognition involves his manufactured quarrel with Soltyk. In order to elevate himself to the stature of "gentleman," and warrant his participation in a duel, he calls upon the social position of his family:

> With eagerness he recalled that he was a german gentleman, with a university education, who had never worked, a member of an honorable family!--he remembered each detail socially to his advantage: he had arbitrarily revived even the title of Freiherr that, it was rumoured in his family, his ancestors had borne. With Bitzenko he had referred to himself as 'the Freiherr Otto Kreisler.'
>
> The snob that emerged was, in this obsession of disused and disappearing life, the wild assertion of vitality: it was the clamour for universal recognition that life and the beloved self were still there: he was almost dead (he had promised his father his body for next month and must be punctual), but people already had begun treading upon him and treating him as a corpse. . . .[74]

Once again clothing is made to play a significant part, as Kreisler puts on the attire appropriate to his pose. When Tarr encounters him in the cafe he notices his strikingly altered appearance: Kreisler has donnned for the adventure a "dazzling white" collar, a necktie that Tarr has never seen before, and a pair of shining boots. Kreisler has gained assistance in this mission from Bitzenko, who also has assumed the appearance of respectability: "He was dressed with perfect 'correctness' suitable to such occasions and such missions as his appeared to be. . . . ."[75] Although the cafe staff is impressed by Kreisler's appearance and manner, the effect is hardly convincing to Tarr: Kreisler is not, he reflects, "a man with whom a duel need be fought" because he is "in a weak position to claim such privileges in spite of the additional blacking on his boots."[76] Kreisler's determination, however, makes the confrontation unavoidable and the next morning finds the two instigators of the duel literally dressed to kill: "Bitzenko with his own hand had brushed the back of Kreisler's coat; on tiptoe doing this he looked the picture of an amiable child: they were together there in Kreisler's room before they started like two little schoolboys dressing up in preparation for some escapade."[77]

The actual "duel" deteriorates almost immediately into an undisciplined fracas that makes a joke of any semblance of gentility. The "field of honour" resounds at one point with cries and the sound of blows being struck. When order is finally restored an attempt to recover some dignity and composure is made: the men dust themselves off, rearrange their collars, and pick up their hats. The accidental killing of

Soltyk once again deprives Kreisler of any satisfaction. He wanders aimlessly towards the German border, casting off en route his formal guise in favor of a shabby outfit that reduces him to the status of a "dangerous vagabond." Even the officers to whom he surrenders himself do not take him seriously: "So you had a duel eh? . . . they all laughed with nervous suddenness at the picture of this hobo defending his honour at twenty paces."[78] When Kreisler is placed in an appropriately barren cell his mind is given over to images which seem to characterize the emptiness of his life: "He lay upon his bed: he turned over the shell of many empty and depressing hours he had lived; in all these listless concave shapes he took a particular pleasure."[79] His tragic end, carried out in a mechanical fashion, indicates the final extinction of his spirit.

Kreisler and Dostoevsky's underground man

Contemporary critical reviewers of Tarr mention a likeness to Dostoevsky because of the character of Kreisler. As early as September, 1918, T. S. Eliot stated that it was "already a commonplace to compare Lewis to Dostoevsky."[80] Often the basis for the comparison seems to be merely a general impression, with little, if any, elaboration. The character most frequently referred to as bearing a similarity to Kreisler is Stravrogin of The Possessed, although, according to Geoffrey Wagner, Lienhard Bergel in a paper delivered to the Modern

Language Association of America in 1955 said "it is the manner of The Notes from the Underground rather than that of The Possessed, which is continued in Lewis's novel."[81] An examination of the two works discloses some interesting parallels of matter as well as manner.

Kreisler and the underground man have become so self-conscious that they are unable to function socially and have become increasingly isolated and spiteful. Kreisler's abode is a "dead hole of a place" resembling a small cave, while the underground man's retreat he describes as a "mouse-hole" and as "my shell, my cave, in which I concealed myself from all mankind. . . ."[82] The actions of both men are motivated by resentment and a masochistic desire to suffer. Just as Kreisler takes himself to the elite Bonnington Club in his shabby outfit, the underground man is drawn to the fashionable Nevsky where the socially prominent mingle in their finery, and where he knows he will be an outsider, humiliated by the insignificance of his person and, he says, the "wretchedness of my attire":

> At such minutes there used to be a convulsive twinge at my heart, and I used to feel hot all down my back at the mere thought of the wretchedness of my attire, of the wretchedness and abjectness of my little scurrying figure. This was a regular martyrdom, a continual, intolerable humiliation at the thought, which passed into an incessant and direct sensation, that I was a mere fly in the eyes of all this world, a nasty, disgusting fly--more intelligent, more highly developed, more refined in feeling than any of them,

> of course, but a fly that was continually making way for every one, insulted and injured by every one. Why I inflicted this torture upon myself, why I went to the Nevsky, I don't know. I felt simply drawn there at every possible opportunity.[83]

Both men suffer from a frustrating sense of obscurity which they resent and which they seek desperately to overcome by similar means. The underground man makes elaborate preparations for a confrontation with a man he has arbitrarily selected as an opponent, the first of which is to seek an elevated social status by means of formal attire:

> At last I made up my mind completely. But my preparations took a great deal of time. To begin with, when I carried out my plan I should need to be looking rather more decent, and so I had to think of my get-up. 'In case of emergency, if, for instance, there were any sort of public scandal . . . I must be well dressed; that inspires respect and of itself puts us on an equal footing in the eyes of society.'
>
> With this object I asked for some of my salary in advance, and bought at Tchurkin's a pair of black gloves and a decent hat. Black gloves seemed to me both more dignified and bon ton then the lemon-coloured ones which I had contemplated at first. . . . I had got ready long beforehand a good shirt, with white bone studs. . . .[84]

The incident succeeds, but is only temporarily satisfying. Later in the narrative, at a dinner to which he has been reluctantly invited, he attacks the company verbally and actually challenges one of its members to a duel; but things go no farther than an imaginary slapping of the intended victim's face and preparations for seconds and pistols. There is a striking similarity in the incidents described above and those taking place in Tarr, as there is in the personalities of the two protagonists. Lewis himself writes at length in Rude Assignment of his fascination with Dostoevsky in his youth, to the extent that, he says: "I was for some years spiritually a Russian--a character in some Russian novel."[85]

Lewis himself as bourgeois-bohemian

It is tempting also to see as the basis for many of the ideas, characters, and events of Tarr a number of Lewis's own experiences during the first decade of the century in Paris. In this context, however, those relating only to his interest in clothing are relevant. In Rude Assignment, recalling his days in Paris, he speaks of his transformation under the influence of this milieu, and how his altered appearance signified a casting off of the staid tradition-bound British temperament in favor of a more international and unorthodox pose:

> It is dangerous to go to heaven when you are too young. You do not understand it and I did not learn to work in Paris. Many things, however, found their way into my mind as I moved about.--First of all, I altered my appearance. Driven, by a vocational ferment, out of the British rut of snobbish sloth, I now became transformed, in contact with the Latin life, into something so different that had I a few years later encountered someone I had been to school with he would not have recognized me. I still went to a tailor in Brook Street for my clothes, but persuaded him to cut them into what must have seemed to his insular eye outrageous shapes.
>
> Gradually the bad effects of English education wore off, or were deliberately discarded.[86]

Several letters to his mother during this period indicate a keen interest in his personal attire. In 1907 he writes: "I have bought a wonderful new hat which makes me look ever so much more handsome. I'm going to buy a fur collar as soon as I can see one cheap for this next winter: like this: a long one, that buttons onto the coat. I let my hair down underneath the hat: the effect is astonishing. [2 sketches of himself in hat.]"[87] Giving himself over to the atmosphere of the avant-garde Lewis apparently became, in appearance, a bohemian: "After eight years on the Continent--including a good deal of time spent in the company of Augustus John--Lewis looked the proper bohemian: wide-brimmed black hat and black cape, an unkempt moustache, and long dark hair hanging loosely over his neck and about his pale, slightly petulant face."[88] Lewis writes of his acquaintance with German people, many of them "bourgeois-bohemians," but there surely is, as W. K. Rose suggests, something of Lewis himself in the characters of Tarr: "Contemporaries recall him as a romantic figure in Montparnasse and the Quartier Latin, caped in black with a large black hat, carrying slim, soft-leather-bound books of poetry, their coloured silk markers fluttering. This was the world he was to memorialise in Tarr, and there are glints of Percy W. Lewis--café intellectual, spendthrift Don Juan, aspirant to Parnassus--in several of the book's male characters."[89] After Lewis's return to England in 1909 and his association with the Rebel Art Centre there was again an alteration in his appearance to reflect a more serious attitude: "When the Rebel Art Centre opened, Lewis cut his hair, dressed in tailored suits, and insisted on similar neatness from his associates. Kate Lechmere had to dress in simple white blouses and long dark skirts like a high class shop girl. By maintaining a professional tone at the Centre, Lewis hoped to keep artiness and amateurism at bay."[90] His adoption of a conservative style in dress in reaction to the romantic fashions of bohemia may provide a clue to Tarr's noticeably formal outfit, discussed earlier. A pronouncement in Blast nicely sums up Lewis's ultimate view of the whole matter: "It is not necessary to be an outcast bohemian, to be unkempt or poor, anymore than it is necessary to be rich or handsome, to be an artist. Art is nothing to do with the coat you wear. A top-hat can well hold the Sixtine. A cheap hat could hide the image of Kephren."[91]

Tarr is a seminal work containing a surprising number of the ideas pursued in Lewis's many subsequent writings. In addition to specific issues such as amateurism and its stultifying effect on genuine creation, the nature of art in its relation to life as examined in the lucubrations of Tarr, or in the existential crises of Kreisler, the novel reflects a constant preoccupation with the relationship of the human personality to the multifarious means by which it is clothed, both physically and psychologically. One discovers an amazing variety of perspectives from which this phenomenon is dramatized in the characters and situations in the novel. It is a subject, the possibilities of which, Lewis realized, are inexhaustible, but which he never grew tired of examining.

Victorian remnants and the "societification of art": The Apes of God

The Apes of God is described by its author as "the only one of my books which can be described as pure Satire. . . ."[92] In a letter to Richard Aldington he speaks of his external approach in the book: "I do not suppose a book has ever been written in which so much attention has been given to the externals--the shell, the pelt the physical behavior of people, as the Apes of God."[93] The satiric technique employed is, of course, suited to the content or argument of the book: Lewis's fundamental criticism of the society he describes is that its existence is predominantly superficial, and the plethora of external detail is intended to emphasize the absence of any substance beneath the gorgeous exteriors of the "apes."

In The Mysterious Mr. Bull Lewis employs the ubiquitous Lewisian image of a shell to elucidate the process by which the English aristocracy created a social facade at the expense of whatever natural wit it formerly possessed:

> For this attractiveness was achieved not only at the expense of an entire people, but also at the expense of the very intelligence upon which such a leader-class should base itself. The notable vacuum which this attractiveness concealed, the full extent of which has become apparent in recent years, was in fact a sort of excavation. With the material excavated the crust was composed.
>
> When that shell cracked, it was found that there was nothing there--that this oligarchy had, as it were, been living on its intellectual capital. In other words, all its intelligence had been used up in making itself attractive: in Style, in short.[94]

The Apes of God satirizes the manner in which a privileged segment of English society has clothed itself, from the personal attire of its members, to its habitat, and to the clothing of its mind as it is manifested in speech. The image of a shell is used repeatedly, as in the description of the Follett mansion, to convey the idea of an exterior unsupported by any vital substance. With its vacant rooms and gaping furniture, the Follett mansion serves as a metaphor for the pretentious excesses of a previous era. The fashionably diminutive Archie Margolin, finding himself in the midst of "upholstered shells of vanished cyclop beefeaters," feels somewhat ill-at-ease: "He was conscious of the vast unoccupied spaces of the drawing-room. The hulking chairs gaped vainly for the bottoms of the defunct, the capacious Eighteenth-Century posteriors."[95] Although anachronistic, these objects of a former splendor continue stubbornly to assert themselves: "Watched by substances of an alien life he was nevertheless oppressed and contemptuous: this culture was dead as mutton but its great carcass offended him--it would take a hundred years to melt."[96]

What we witness in The Apes of God is, in part, a clinging to the outdated and lifeless remnants of the past by members of a cultural establishment. Playing a major part as well, however, are a host of pseudo-artists who appear in the guise of contemporary artistic fashions. There are no significant differences between these two broad categories of apes, however, for both exhibit only varieties of inauthentic existence. Indeed, the two are mutually sympathetic, both enjoying the prestige they derive from the current "societification of art."

Providing a thorough analysis of the entire scene is the illusive pundit, Pierpoint. The current economic prosperity, he explains in his famous Encyclical, by providing a herd of people with the opportunity to indulge in the delights of art, has created serious difficulties for the genuine artist. There is, first of all, the group of non-productive apes who put themselves into the milieu of bohemia merely to gossip about those doing the work. They are further annoying because they occupy the studios that are of such crucial importance to painters. Of greater concern, however, are the relatively few active apes who "dabble and daub a little," because they constitute a much greater threat to the genuine artist:

> They are more damaging for the very reason that they are identified, in the mind of the public, with art and with intelligence. Their influence is brought to bear invariably in the propogation of the second-rate--for that does not challenge their conceit, and it fraternizes with the fundamental vulgarity with which they have not parted, in their new surroundings. Yet the indications of their favour are considered as direct tips from the stable, as oracles of inside information. They are the friends, the bosom friends of art. And their opinions are invested with the authority of this intimacy. Unlike most friends, however (whose malignities are often illuminating) theirs seldom bear any relation to the original. They are the unpaying guests of the house of art: the crowd of thriving valets who adopt the livery of this noble but now decayed establishment, pour se donner un air--to mock, in their absence, its masters.[97]

Finally, a select few actually produce some art, albeit less than the "real thing," and it is toward the activities of this group that the special attention of Pierpoint is directed for the edification of any interested observer: "In a little artificial world of carefully fostered self-esteem I will show you a pseudo-Proust. I shall be able to introduce you, among a family of 'great poets', (each of them upon a little frail biographical family pedestal) where all the exaltations of labour, a passionate experience, and probably a straitened life, issuing in works of great creative art, are thinly parodied, at great expense."[98]

The fraudulent practice of aping the life and work of genuine artists is by no means confined to the environment of

Paris, Pierpoint explains, but may in fact be found to prevail in London as well. The Bloomsbury group receives specific attention for relying heavily on money and social prestige, as well as for making themselves conspicuous through the adoption of an absurd style of dress and an eccentric manner of speech:

> In England for a very long time this sort of *societification* of art has been in progress. It is even possible that the English were the first in the field with the *Ape* art-type. The notorious *amateurism* of the anglo-saxon mind makes this doubly likely. In Bloomsbury it takes the form of a select and snobbish club. Its foundation-members consisted of monied middle-class descendants of victorian literary splendor. Where they approximate to the citizens of this new cosmopolitan Bohemia is in their substitution of money for talent as a qualification for membership. Private-means is the almost invariable rule. In their discouragement of too much unconservative originality they are very strong. The tone of 'society' (of a spurious donnish social elegance) prevails among them. Where they have always *differed* has been in their *all* without exception being Apes of God. That is the first point. All are 'geniuses', before whose creations the other members of the Club in an invariable ritual, must swoon with appreciation. There is another rather curious way in which they differ--namely in their dress. For whereas the new Bohemian is generally as 'mondain' and smart, if a little fantastic, as he or she can be, this little phalanstery of *apes of god* went the length of actually dressing the part of the penniless 'genius'. In this way they presented the curious spectacle of a lot of men and women, possessed of handsome bank balances, drifting and moping about in the untidiest fashion. This rather scandalous shabbiness it was, besides a queer exaggeration of speech (bringing to one's mind the sounds associated with the spasms of a rough Channel passage) that cut them off from the outside world. . . .[99]

The Encyclical purports to provide a framework and favored interpretation of what transpires in the action of the novel. It is a temptation, at first, simply to consider Lewis as the speaker, but it is one that should be resisted, if only because Pierpoint is, after all, a character in the novel even though he does not make an appearance. A further temptation might be to seek to identify some of the novel's characters with actual people. Like most defenders of their own satires, Lewis strenuously denied that he based his satiric portraits on specific individuals. In reply to a letter from C. H. Prentice, suggesting such a practice, Lewis replied:

> As to your believing that you detect a likeness in some of my personnages to people in real life, in that you are mistaken. I have here and there used things, it is true that might suggest some connection. But the cases you choose are not ones I could, I am afraid, remove from my picture. If the bodies I describe fit the morning suits of real people and they thrust [?] them in and lay claim to them, however much the clothes fitted I should not countenance the wearing of such mis-fits by any of my characters, to all of whom I supply suits to measure from my own store.100

The prologue, "Death-The-Drummer," gives a view of the private world of the Folletts, whose antique home and moribund inhabitants form an oppressive picture of dissolution and triviality. Every detail used to describe Lady Fredigonde is selected to reduce her movements to that of a mindless mechanism: "Aside from that for self expression there was nothing left in her body. The neck had survived, that was still elastic, but it dwelt upon a plaster-bust. Her arms were of plaster--they moved, but upon either hand of a lay-torso."[101] The initial scene is, in part, a grotesque parody of the toilet of Pope's Belinda; the cringing Bridget attends with reverence to the making-up of her mistress, while the latter chatters about her all-important lace-cap collection. When the arrangement of her exterior has been completed, Lady Fredigonde's attention is directed inward, and we are given a glimpse into the furniture of her mind: "Cut off from the optic or tactile connections, Fredigonde passed most of her time in her mental closet, a hermit in her own head. Sometimes she would Stein away night and morning to herself, making patterns of conversations, with odds and ends from dead disputes, and cat's-cradles of this thing and that--a veritable peasant industry, of personal chatterboxing and shortsighted nonsense."[102] On this occasion, she dreams now of a museum sometime in the future housing her famous headdresses. The dream becomes a nightmare, however, when the collection is defiled by a Red Sunday-School troup, and Lady Fredigonde herself is embarrassed by losing some of her clothing in the attempt to escape. The dream-sequence is one of a number of incidents in the novel which suggest, with comic irony, the clash of contemporary culture and technology with the remnants of the old Victorian world.

The conclusion of the prologue is a grossly detailed account of the movements of Fredigonde from one chair to another. She has for so long occupied the compartments of her archaic milieu that they have become as intimate with her as shells, which she vacates and reoccupies with increasing difficulty at fixed intervals:

> Without fuss the two masses came apart. They were cut open into two pieces. As her body came away from the dense bolsters of its cyclopean cradle, out into space, the skimpy alpaca forearm of the priestly Bridget, a delicate splint, pressed in against the small of the four-square back. It was applied above the region where the mid-victorian wasp-waist lay buried in adipose.
>
> The unsteady solid rose a few inches, like the levitation of a narwhal. Seconded by alpenstock and body-servant (holding her humble breath), the escaping half began to move out from the deep vent. It abstracted itself slowly. Something imperfectly animate had cast off from a portion of its self. It was departing, with a grim paralytic toddle, elsewhere. The socket of the enormous chair yawned just short of her hindparts. It was a sort of shell that had been, according to some natural law, suddenly vacated by its animal. But this occupant, who never went far, moved from trough to trough--another everywhere stood hollow and ready throughout the compartments of its elaborate animal dwelling.[103]

The laborious move takes her to an enclosure, the function of which is ambiguous. Awaiting her approach, the embrasure of the bay window has the appearance of a stage which Fredigonde then slowly occupies. But immediately the principal actor becomes observer and the stage a window like a movie-screen through which she sees the activity in the street below. Once again the new is seen through the old: "Idly she was watching the bodies of the omnibuses fit themselves into the space and slip out of it, slacking or speeding according to the pulsation of this current of machines. As if they had been shadows upon the ceiling, cast into a darkened room from a sunlit street underneath, she remarked their passage. The window before her shook with the weight of the super-traffic. The amusing skeleton of new skyscraping flats entered into novel combinations with the geometric maze of the patterned curtains."[104]

Other figures appear throughout the narrative who contribute further to the oppressive panorama of decrepitude and obsolescence that begins in the prologue. Lady Robinia Finnian Shaw, for example, is in all respects merely a relic of the past: "Robinia . . . conforms to the prevalent fashion for victorian atmosphere. She is a period-piece that is a wan confection: she has a deep straight parting in her flaxen hair, her very narrow colourless face possesses the sly and pallid repose of an entirely devitalized instrument of post-Ninety satisfaction. As it were a permanently run-down domestic animal, Robinia drifts, scenting things a little, staring distractedly at nothing--and, sometimes, between her fingers she twists a straight silken wisp of the yellow hair of her head."[106] Even the servants are decked out in the fashions of the previous age, as Mrs. Bosun is when she receives Dan and Willie:

> Mrs. Bosun sat in her closet (she did not rise when the two came in from her windsor chair) which she presided over: a dignified red-white-and-blue

> domestic personage . . . with a discreet foam of decent frilling bursting from under her buttoned-up period-bodice-case (bust-glove or rib-trunk)--rigid with stay-busks--and also a trickle out of the mouths of her massive serge sleeves of spotless undie-white: as she moved there was a period-petticoat-rustle with it of silk and black callamanca combined, under the barme-cloth or the callous apron as white as the morning-milk--flannel and swanskin certainly in comfortable bloodbaked sheaths clung upon the buxom body, of beef-bred british limb and torse, of this model matron.[106]

The antique furnishings and shadowy atmosphere of the house itself are further expressions of the personality of the family. A huge "hastily-converted norman grange" is the setting for dinner: "It is ill-lighted and draughty, a large log fire is at either extremity. The torches and a multitude of twinkling candles upon the refectory table--to seat at a pinch a hundred diners--are the only illumination. . . . A constantly agitated firmament of shadows, lost in the timbered roof--the rushing, slovenly-dressed, hired waiters--a scratch troop of flustered women--everything sustains the air of restless improvisation, a sort of quaint, shabby lavishness, down to the cheap and perfunctory disguises of the guests."[107]

Since whatever wit and vitality formerly possessed by members of this privileged society has now faded away, their clothing has acquired the utmost importance as virtually their only defence against threats to their dignity. There is, then, a terrible fear of having any part of this protective cover removed. The horror of being partially disrobed that Lady Fredigonde experiences in her dream takes place in reality for Lady Truncheon at the Lenten party when Lady Harriet, with malicious and childish contempt, steps on her train:

> Lady Harriet was eyeing Lady Truncheon with a thunderstruck face which was a reflection of that of Lord Phoebus, which was also thunderstruck. They both stared at the wife of Sir Thoman Truncheon, Knight--her skirt having vanished from the waist line and a great gap occurring behind, Lady Truncheon stood speechless with indescribable passion. The mighty legs stood in startling negligee, like a couple of stalwart old silk-decked stallions, which had drawn her at top speed with fine team-work so far--then come to the abruptest halt. A streamer of silk hung down in front, a comic apron. Dignity was impossible. The world of without, irreverent eyes, were made privy to hind-quarters lately ennobled. A *fesses* of silk--born of coarse disruption--almost stared you in the face.[108]

Despite personal humiliations such as these, as well as the occasional disruptions from the encroachment of contemporary civilization, the world of the Folletts and the Finnian Shaws continues stubbornly to endure, if only in the form of its antiquated husks. Even in the midst of violence in most quarters of London during the general strike "the mansion of the proud Folletts reared its victorian battlements to the May-sky. . . ."[109]

Although Matthew Plunkett is much younger physically than the Follet or Finnian Shaw generation, his consciousness is nonetheless submerged in the past. In his abode he is surrounded by a variety of relics and by a layer of dust that contaminates everything including his hair and nostrils. Submerged in this atmosphere he conjures up romantic scenes in which he wanders with dreamy delight. He is, in part, a caricature of the Bloomsbury personality whose prestige, Lewis believed, depended substantially on their connections with eminent figures of the Victorian era.[110] He actually lives on "Bloomsbury square with its museum of much-etched, and then untidily painted, victorian trees."[111] His movements and even his thoughts proclaim him a puppet possessed by the affectations of a long-established social milieu.

Matthew is found, like an early-Victorian lady, examining his own shell-collection. As the time arrives for his precisely regulated midday meal, he is reluctant to leave his lifeless museum: "Tempting to continue, the idle apprentice, among the twisted relics of little life--cartonnages of moluscs, an orchestra of whispering toy-trumpets, corkscrew-curls, stars and thimbles. In sympathy with the waves--detached from the glassy Evolution--it would be pleasant to grope keenly among a handful of old natural puzzles, a few scraps of a feast of reason of Eminent Victorian giants, along with for his proper count a floating notion or two, of the dejected present. But no it is a case of Go I must!"[112] Moving across the Bloomsbury circus with an affected stumbling gait he finds his way to the Distillery where he orders a Pilsner with "regulation shyness" and a "nasal stammer modelled upon the effects of a severe catarrh. . . ."[113]

The appearance of the Shell-van provides an interesting clash of contemporary technology with an antiquated environment. The history of the Shell Transport and Trading Company itself reflects a vigorous evolution from trade in imported shells for nineteenth-century collectors, to commerce in vast quantities of oil (a "fossil-fuel," formed by the decomposition of marine life) for the operation of modern industry. The explosion of the truck is a bold assertion of the new technology in what is still predominantly a nineteenth-century domain:

> The Bloomsbury square with its museum of much-etched and then untidily painted, victorian trees, untidily posing, sluttish and sly, came to life (at Matthew Plunkett's emergence as he stepped boldly out) with a terrible explosion, between the wheels of a Shell-van full of petrol-tins, nosing its way round the railings. Vans simply farted and passed on he thought, as he jumped up a little, as though he were shot, and his pulse clanged in his heart, upon the second step. SHELL IS SO DIFFERENT![114]

Matthew encounters the Shell-van again later as he waits nervously to cross a busy street: "But there was a sharp explosion. That van again! Like a bad penny, cracking off as it went, the thing had turned up. It had rushed past him with its bomb. SHELL IS SO DIFFERENT! He grinned after it, it was a thing that was a music-hall turn, the clown-van. He and the clown-van played peep-bo in Bloomsbury, each had a distinct rôle who could doubt. The thing had recognized him immediately: it went petarding into the next street, tail up. What a van!"[115] The encounters with the Shell-van parallel the scene in which Lady Fredigonde is the stolid observer of the steadily encroaching modern city beneath her window.

Like Lady Fredigonde's, Matthew's consciousness has become so imprisoned by his preoccupation with the remnants of an antiquated establishment he can experience only stupid amusement as new energies erupt under his eyes.

One of the primary targets of The Apes of God is the youth cult or "cult of the child," a cult that Lewis found to be so prevelant during the several decades following the war. This phenomenon is examined in a number of Lewis's books and articles, most often in its relation to politics. In The Apes of God a romantic concept of youth is projected by or imposed upon a number of characters playing the role of the modern artist. It is made clear, of course, that the adoption of a mask of youth in order to benefit by the current fashion is as impotent and false as clinging to the remnants of the formerly fashionable past.

Lady Fredigonde's nephew, Richard Wittingdon, has adopted every possible cliché associated with the youth cult among the privileged class. The roar of his Bugatti and the trembling of windows and doors precedes his obstreperous entrance into Lady Fredigonde's presence: "A lush vociferating optimism, hearty as it was dutiful, was brutally exploded in her direction: a six-foot two, thirty-six-summered, army-and-public-school, Winchester and Sandhurst, firework--marked 'boyish high spirits'--simply went off; but only as a preliminary demonstration, as a benefaction by-the-way to the world-at-large."[116] His appearance and demeanor are at all times carefully calculated to sustain the image of ideal youth in confident full-bloom, even though his age makes such a pose absurd. When he enters the room he "kicks his jolly way over" to his aged aunt with his hands in the pockets of his "sports-bags," and a "happy 'here-I-am' smile upon a bronzed beaming boyish face. . . ."[117] The interview proceeds in a strictly mechanical style, as Richard plays the shy and respectful "modern" generation to the authority and prestige of the "Gossip belle and ex-Chat-champion."[118]

"Pamela Farnham's Tea-Party" carries further the satire on the cult of youth, presenting a dozen or more puppets in conversation over a variety of childish subjects. Their greatest enthusiasm is exercised in celebration of the juvenility of Dan and Jimmie, both of whom are in their nineteenth year. And at still another gathering of apes the host, Lionel Kein, acknowledges the fashionable benefits of Dan's youth while seeking to benefit himself by referring to his own equally prestigious age: "'Only nineteen!' There was the croupy rattle of paternal pathos. 'Only nineteen: I wonder if you know how lucky you are! I don't expect you do! I only wish I were double your age my dear boy, yes double your age--I should be quite satisfied.' He drawled 'quite satisfied', pitiful and nasal, with a senile titubation of the tongue, exploiting the death-rattle--Pierrot Vieux--poor

Uncle Punch of the Children's Hour, the most popular grown-up ever broadcast--the old pet of the Pan-nursery, Nunky Li."[119] Lewis's pursuit of this theme directs attention not only to the practice of putting on the particular masks of youth or old age, but to the more general folly of submitting to irrelevant classifications that result in what he describes, in The Art of Being Ruled, as "the piecemealing of the personality."

The chief comic butt of The Apes of God, and the character whose directed peregrinations constitute most of the action of the book, is Daniel Boleyn. Too simple-minded to be guilty of any affectations himself, Dan's only motivating impulse is his simple and unequivocal love for Horace Zagreus. Because of his association with Zagreus and the "apes," however, he is clothed in all the clichés of youth and its accompanying genius. His absolute innocence and lack of individuality facilitate the imposition on him by Zagreus of virtually any attribute. Zagreus, who is presumably manipulating him for his own purposes, describes him to Lionel Kein in the following way: "He's very shy. . . . You'd hardly think to look at him that he heard what we were saying would you, but he takes it all in every word of it, nothing escapes him, he is a genius. He is probably suffering agonies of shyness underneath that calm exterior at this moment. Still waters run deep."[120] For the ageing Zagreus he represents still unchannelled and unchallenged power.

On the physical level there is a great deal of uncertainty regarding Dan's sexual identity. This problem has a history prior to the action of the book. At Pamela Farnham's Dan blushes as he recollects the time when he and another school-boy were caught dressed as girls. In almost every scene in which he appears we find him being dressed or undressed as though he were a doll. Seeking only consolation for his unrequited love for Zagreus, he is made to suffer an embarrassing divestment at the hands of Mélanie Blackwell, whose technique indulges his childishness:

> 'You're only a child Dandarling aren't you now but a big baby, I'll be your nursemaid this time honey and put you to Bye-Bye. I know how to do that--no let Mélanie do this for you, silly--don't be contrary! You must be undressed and all else you can't get to sleep you know: let me pull off this jacket it will make you more easy: and the little waisty! Oh it is a tight little waisty and all--there, its stuck on the little shoulder-boulders! but off she comes, yes that's come nicely! That wasn't difficult was it now, come off with those big manly braces--no over the shoulder! That's right--now the other! Things that way are more simple, that's a big improvement: you can lay down your beautiful tired head on the pillow honey, it's all over.'
>
> There was nothing to be done. Against this army of maternal fingers marching against his modesty as if it had been his chastity, one could but blush and blush and blush. Soon big baby-fellow would be as nude and naked as if this woman had just brought him into the world out of her very self and all, that was it--he was so helpless. It was the trick of the mothering that was being his undoing. Oh he was so terribly conscious of the nude pieces!--How she hurt him with her gloved fingers![121]

On another occasion he carelessly falls into the hands of a "lesbian-ape" who forces him to strip in order to pose for a painting. At Lord Osmund's Lenten party he is made to appear in historical garb of doublet, codpiece, and puffed-up hose. When the latter are acidentally consumed by fire, he is directed to don a feminine outfit provided by Mrs. Bosun. This transformation precipitates the vigorous pursuit by an old goat inflamed with desire for Dan's apparent feminine charms. The sexual confusion that often plagues Dan's social contacts, while providing some very entertaining comedy, is nonetheless related to one of the themes central to the book: the lack of discrimination proceeding from the proliferation of false images, especially among those retaining considerable influence over the intellectual climate of contemporary society.

The very lengthy section entitled "Lord Osmund's Lenten Party" brings together many of the apes in final review. The Finnian Shaw house itself is, as one would expect, a Victorian mansion filled with a tasteless conglomeration of furniture and objects d'art: "In addition to the punkah, Congolese figures and Malayan masks make their appearance here and there, upon the walls of this giant dining-room. A painting by Severini (of Scaramouche with a guitar and two masked pals) hangs near a cubist rendering of the Woolworth Building in New York, and a post-pre-Raphaelite landscape by a period-fancying Gloucestershire Hebrew, to point the grangerizing of the time. Rough craters, of pseudo-etruscan design, are distributed at intervals along the centre of the table."[122]

The party takes the form of a masquerade, which by accentuating the already established artificiality of the guests, produces a surrealist atmosphere. Throughout the account of the party, and indeed recurring throughout the entire course of the book, there is the underlying motif of a stage performance. On several occasions the tiresome consistency of the roles invites comparison with the Italian comedy:

> In fact in a sort of ill-acted Commedia dell' Arte, with its Pantalones and Arlechinos (the family of Finnian Shaws monopolizing the Harlequinn rôle, however unsuited for it), this family-circle passed its time. A passion for the stilted miniature drama of average social life, as it immediately surrounded them, had assumed the proportions with this family of a startling self-abuse, incessantly indulged in. Their Theatre was always with them. Their enemies--Pantalones, comic servants, detestable opponents (whose perfidy disrespect malice or cabal they would signally frustrate--unmask them, knaves and coxcombs to a man!) always this shadowy cast was present. Indoors and out-of-doors, dilated, in full war-paint, sometimes as bombastic phantoms, or else, laid aside in doll-like collapse--but always present. So their commerce would appear, to be an outsider come into the circle of their existence, like some unvarying 'shop', with all its monotonous technique--*concetti*, *soggetto*, *repertorio*--masks of gravity, malice, or lechery--cloaks of the Dottore, air-bladders, rice-powder--incessantly in evidence.[123]

Always the leading figure when present at any gathering is the mysterious Horace Zagreus, whose notoriety is based largely on his capacity for deception and the variety of his occupations. He is in this way identifiable with his mythological namesake, Zagreus, who is famous for his ability to alter his form:

> Zeus in the form of a serpent visited Persephone, and she bore him Zagreus, that is, Dionysus, a horned infant. Scarcely was he born, when the babe

> mounted the throne of his father Zeus and mimicked the great god by brandishing the lightning in his tiny hand. But he did not occupy the throne long; for the treacherous Titans, their faces whitened with chalk, attacked him with knives while he was looking at himself in a mirror. For a time he evaded their assaults by turning himself into various shapes, assuming the likeness successively of Zeus and Cronus, of a young man, of a lion, a horse, and a serpent. Finally, in the form of a bull, he was cut to pieces by the murderous knives of his enemies.[124]

Horace Zagreus has assumed a variety of positions in the past and is currently acting as "patron" for a succession of pseudo-artists. For his appearance at Lord Osmund's he is arrayed in a fantastic conglomeration of images whose significance he fails to grasp, although he revels in the obscurity the outfit provides: "But examine me, Julius--pocket your envy, you poor split-person--salute this strange shell I have grown! Here I stand, Julius Ratner, as florid as Boro-Badur. My very fly-buttons are allusive."[125] His final act before leaving for the party seems to indicate that his current interest in magic, together with the sense of power the costume gives him, has really awakened in him the primitive belief in the magical power of clothing to retain something of the wearer's being: "At the door Zagreus stopped, catching sight of the many gaping life-like garments, he was leaving behind in the room. He returned and battered them out of human shape as far as he could. Some were recalcitrant and seemed to cling to their second-hand life. At last he had subdued them. The bed, too, had his imprint removed from it--and it presented no longer a surface upon which magic might be practised."[126] At the Lenten party, as well as at other gatherings, Zagreus displays what has become for him an increasingly absorbing role, the aping of Pierpoint. He himself, he maintains, has received instructions from Pierpoint to guide his own actions as well as the actions of those under his charge: every detail of the Lenten party costumes, he says, have come from Pierpoint. What is more, Zagreus is virtually incapable of uttering any opinion concerning art without invoking Pierpoint's authority and, such is the extent of the domination, that what he says is almost always expressed in exactly the same words Pierpoint himself has used. Zagreus has in fact clothed himself so completely in the personality of Pierpoint that he is increasingly unable to distinguish his own personality from his so-called mentor's. After listening to one of Zagreus's long speeches about the nature of reality in fiction Lionel Kein observes: "He has a double-personality, I don't believe he knows when he's Pierpoint and when he's himself."[127] What, then, promises to be a provocatively complex individual, turns out to be merely an obsessive dissembler, devoid of any individuality whatsoever.

The host of characters in the novel seem, initially, to fall into one or two categories; the victims or satiric targets, and their infallible critics. That this simple classification is inaccurate becomes increasingly apparent as the satire develops. Clothed in mystery, an invisible Pierpoint has assumed the ultimate seat of judgement in matters of art, and his ideas are propogated by certain privileged agents such as Zagreus and Blackshirt. Much of what is contained in the Encyclical, it is true, can be found in Lewis's own critical works, but it is important to realize that Lewis always strenuously opposed the vesting of authority in any one source, as it is here invested in Pierpoint. Pierpoint is not a Lewisian mouthpiece, he is a warning. In The Art of Being Ruled, for example, Lewis examines the dangers proceeding from the "vulgarization of disgust," an attitude that gives virtually total control of opinion and influence over to certain interests who use the wholesale contempt for the masses as justification for their own actions. Pierpoint's pronouncements are absolute and clothed in the detached style of indisputable scientific facts. His technique of broadcasting incessantly through the mouths of puppets such as Zagreus and Blackshirt further directs attention to the inordinate domination of a hidden central control manifest only in the bodies of its functionaries, who may easily become the instruments of a tyrannous cynicism.

Dan Boleyn's reactions during the course of a final disquisition by Blackshirt make an ironic comment on the infallibility of Pierpoint. In the Finnian Shaw library Blackshirt gives a demonstration of Pierpointean literary analysis. The subject of his attention is the works of Lord Osmund. The ritual of Blackshirt's pretentious anatomization of the material first enthralls Dan: "Dan looked down at the book, affected by the pierpointean ritual--the rolling up of the sleeves, the pointing of the finger, the solemn passes."[128] However, Dan, who at first has been impressed with Blackshirt's self-assurance, is chilled by the demonstration as it proceeds. He even feels a little sorry for Lord Osmund, whom he at first was tempted to regard as the type of ape Zagreus has sent him out to observe. In the attitude of Blackshirt, too, whom he has naively identified as a great and noted anatomist, he begins to detect in the vaguest way a threatening quality. There is the menace of fire in the matchbox Blackshirt hands him at one point and a threat of slaughter in the books left on the table, "cut down the centre as though with a knife."[129] The analysis, which is an uncompromising attack on every aspect of the books and their author, concludes, predictably enough, with an irrelevant and pretentious affirmation both of Blackshirt's own masculinity and the unquestionable wisdom of his master. The childish and feminine sentimentality he purports to find in Lord Osmund's novels strengthens his own sense of manhood. He has been sent to find something that he has been told is difficult to understand, and he has found the evidence according to schedule. The pedantic sternness and affectation of tough-mindedness that mark his dependence on some higher, and perhaps projected, authority is his protective covering:

> 'I am masculine to a fault!' said he. 'I too find it difficult to understand. At first I was entirely at sea. But here is the evidence. You can't get away from that! Everything I have seen tonight confirms Pierpoint's diagnosis--things pan out exactly as he says!'
>
> The Blackshirt was triumphant--it had once more been demonstrated that Pierpoint was infallible.[130]

His shirt, his whistle, and his petulance (evident in such phrases as "Get up or I'll wring your neck!") identify him finally as a "little black cop." It is fitting that Dan, who has suffered the most, should at the end quietly cast off entirely the tutelage of Pierpoint and his agents, and in doing so acquire some small measure of personal dignity:

> For him the last Ape he was ever to meet had been met with--his log was at last a museum of natural history--there was every variety of ape-like creature, to show like Darwin out of what men came--submen and supermen. For the last time he had seen those potent gestures with which Zagreus or Starr-Smith--great understudies of that invisible magnifico Pierpoint--pointed towards some embodiment of impotence. And he must say goodbye to all that genius too, which had been the star and the wild plum--the lode-stone and the baksheesh--the spell and the solatium. Amen!
>
> And so he slowly tore that log in pieces. Then after that he tore the letter containing the Encyclical, and all those other notes and letters whatsoever, written to him by Horace in good faith, before he had found him out--for he had been found out. His fingers did their sad last work well, and strangled the log and letters. They divided everything--everything in the world--into smaller and smaller pieces--till no sentence at all was intact in all that mass of flattering precept and objurgation.[131]

The ambiguous presence of Pierpoint and his obsessive concern with apes has created difficulties for some readers of

Lewis. Like Godot in Beckett's play, he never appears. However from the start he is compromised by his association with Zagreus and Lionel Kein, and later on by his association with Blackshirt. Zagreus claims that the Encyclical he gives to Dan, when he sends him out to investigate apes and phalansteries of apes, is written by Pierpoint. Blackshirt claims that Pierpoint not only has discovered him, but has supplied him with a map to facilitate his investigation of the Finian Shaw house. In the end Zagreus claims that Pierpoint has compiled a twelve page type-written single-spaced dossier to which he refers when he wishes to rid himself of Dan. Apes like Mélanie Blackwell and Lionel Kein claim him as a former friend. Hugh Kenner offers the following explanation of Lewis's technique with respect to Pierpoint:

> The wonderful local brilliance of presentation dissuades us from wondering why Pierpoint/Lewis has chosen to spend so much time talking to frauds like Zagreus and Lionel Kein. The parallel with 'Bestre' is suggestive: like Ker-Orr, Pierpoint would seem to be a carefully camouflaged indulgence of the author's. Ker-Orr is faking, and we are meant not to notice. Pierpoint's superiority to the Apes is also a fake, and we are meant not to notice that. We are discouraged from thinking of either of these mouthpieces as characters *in* the work. They are the only people at whom the author never looks. Their 'detachment,' we notice once *we* start looking at them, is wholly spurious. Ker-Orr reading Berkeley, or prowling from window to window spying on Bestre's wars, is himself a puppet whom Lewis blandly chooses to treat as a 'soldier of humour.' Pierpoint instructing Zagreus on the techniques for initiating the hopeless 'genius' Dan into the Higher Apery is wasting as much time and ingenuity as any of the Apes.[132]

Lewis often leaves the reader in the uncomfortable position of being unable to find an exemplary figure with whom to identify. But to see the host of apes from the point of view of Pierpoint or any of his puppets is to fall into the same sort of trap as to mistakenly seek to escape the general condemnation of Gulliver's Travels by affiliating oneself with Gulliver.

The Apes of God is a satiric commentary on many facets of post-world-war-one society in which particular attention is focused on the nature and quality of the masks projected by those associated with art. The period was one characterized by considerable experimentation undertaken against a still formidable Victorian background. The figures of Lewis's novel, however, represent the vulgarization of relatively genuine points of view. The putting on of the currently fashionable is shown to be as absurd as a clinging to the vestiges of an outworn establishment. Bertram Starr Smith's disclosure of the reason for his appearance as Blackshirt is a comment on the insubstantiality and fickleness that may be discovered behind the clothing of popular ideals: "Nothing to do with Fascimo--the last thing--can you guess? It's because I picked up three khaki shirts for a few pence and dyed them black--the whole outfit for the three of us did not cost fifteen bob! That is the reason."[133] During the late twenties and thirties Lewis's novels and expository works deal more directly with political movements and the manner in which they are clothed.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE CLOAKS OF POLITICS: PUTTING ON THE PUBLIC

Discovering the nature of the "Power-House"

Politics is an immensely complex and often obscure subject whose limits are impossible to define. During a career in which he showed an increasing interest in its various aspects, Lewis came to realize, as he states in *Rotting Hill* and *The Writer and the Absolute*, that politics is related to virtually every facet of our day-to-day existence. While his writings contain innumerable insights into a great variety of political realities, his attention is most often centred on the inevitable incongruity that is to be discovered between some underlying truth and the manner in which it is clothed for the public view.

Lewis's interest in politics, he recalls in *Blasting and Bombardiering*, began with his participation in world-war-one: "I started the war a different man to what I ended it. More than anything, it was a *political* education. I am slow to learn, but quick to understand. As day by day I sidestepped and dodged the missiles that were hurled at me, and watched other people doing so, I became a politician. I was not then the accomplished politician I am to-day. But the seeds were there."[1] One particular lesson of the war, he recalls, was that ultimate responsibility for the ensuing misery must be traced beyond the military ranks of either side to the unscrupulous politician who carelessly uses those under his control as cannon-fodder: "I, along with millions of others, was standing up to be killed. Very well: but who in fact was it, who was proposing to kill or maim me? I developed a certain inquisitiveness upon that point. I saw clearly that it was not my German opposite number. He, like myself, was an instrument. That we were all on a fool's errand had become plain to many of us. . . ."[2] In the course of describing the terrible futility of the conflict and its demoralizing effect on Western society Lewis refers to Lloyd George's tactic of seeking to justify its occurrence by applying to it such labels as "the War to end War," "the War to make the world safe for democracy," and the "the War to make England a place fit for heroes to live in."[3] And years later in The Writer and the Absolute he refers again to the shameless use of fraudulent persuasion to manipulate potential victims of the slaughter: "One knows why Mr. Lloyd George in World War 1 made use of a phony lyricism, to enjoin men to persist in so exceptional and wearisome a massacre (and why Hitler admired those speeches so greatly): called them 'heroes', gilded their horizons with the promise of perpetual peace."[4] Having initially reflected, during the war, upon the most terrible results of political intrigue, Lewis carried on throughout his life a conscientious inquiry into the basic nature of all political activity.

Seeking, characteristically, its essential elements, he concludes, in Rude Assignment, that the subject of politics includes "anything to do with that burdensome machinery by means of which man maintains himself as a social being."[5] What the maintenance of this machinery involves, basically, is an inevitable and continuous struggle for power by those who become directly involved in political activities. Our environment becomes, as Lewis pictures it, a "Power-House": "It is a Power House--we might call it that--in which we live. It is given up to the generating of power, the atmosphere is heavy with power. Men stalk or strut about, frowning with importance, because they have access to power. Some are heavy with power, as a woman is with child. At the microphone some are almost dripping with power--their words are like bullets or drops of blood, so that the timorous shiver slightly, and the bravest feel none too comfortable."[6] Although Lewis was thoroughly disgusted with the innumerable evils that accompany the incessant contests for the possession of authority, he was never naive enough to suggest that we would be better off without the machinery of government: "Although the power, the presence of unbridled power, causes (in really bad periods) endless suffering, yet without Government--that fat spider that feeds on us, upon whose prodigious web we are convulsed like helpless flies--without all that, there would be no libraries, laboratories, universities, theatres, publishers, great buildings: the Power is, in its origins, for those purposes, and (oh irony!) to assure us safety and peace."[7] What has been created through the organization of a governing body, however, is an inhuman monster whose natural development leads to corruption and ill-will towards those who have given it birth:

> The State (the national, sovereign, State) lives upon a far more primitive level than we do. It shows us ourselves as we ought not to be, in the process of compelling us to live as we ought to live. It seems incurably violent and morally inferior. The cause is partly to be found in Acton's often quoted observation that 'all power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely'. The human dilemma is obvious. Government, with its unrestrained force and power, is necessary (or some force and some power is): but this necessity places us in the keeping of Caliban. It exposes us to precisely that kind of violence to secure ourselves against which we have accepted human government.[8]

An additional and most serious difficulty is that the Caliban of the analogy, taking on an extensive variety of pleasing appearances, or disappearing from sight altogether, has the illusiveness of an Ariel. Government bureaucracy serving as its own confusing cover for the administration of authority, creates a type of sanctuary in which violations of standard behavior go undetected. The problem is further compounded by the fact that individuals who are in direct possession of the power of the state maintain appearances that disguise their real function: "Politicians may be grouped in the same general class as soldiers, and policemen. All are men of force. The Army and Navy, we may recall, are referred to as 'the Forces'. The Police are known as 'the Police Force': or 'the Force'. Politicians are just as much men of force as are the other two. The only difference is that they possess no distinctive uniform, such as helmets, and belts around their waists outside their jackets, nor insignia or rank. They just dress like us. Politicians ought to wear a uniform to distinguish them from us. But they do not."[9] This apparently simple suggestion contains the fundamental point that is to be discovered in Lewis's observations about politics; that is, that they are almost invariably clothed in a manner that is calculated to conceal their true nature.

The Lion and the Fox

The Lion and the Fox was, Lewis recalls in Rude Assignment, his "first political book," preceding in composition, though not publication, The Art of Being Ruled.[10] Furthermore, "the seed of many of my subsequent books," he says, "was in the political thinking to be found there. . . ."[11] The book is an analysis of several major figures of Shakespearean drama as well as an estimate of the personality of their creator. Lewis focuses his examination on the theories of Machiavelli and the profound influence they had on the political thought of renaissance Europe. They came as a shock comparable to that generated by The Origin of Species in the nineteenth century. Just as Darwin exposed the brutal reality of what was formerly concealed by romantic concepts of a benevolent "Mother nature," Machiavelli was responsible for disclosing the raw truth about the nature of governing:

> How the diabolical honesty of Nicolò Machiavelli should have shocked the world at large, and earned him an almost infamous notoriety, is easy to understand. Every organized duplicity felt itself unmasked by one of its own servants. It is doubly easy to see how in England the ungentlemanly frankness of this logician should have been regarded as a first-class scandal. Here was a political philosopher, trained in a small-scale imperialist school amongst the little factious states of Italy, giving away the whole position of the ruler, and revealing even the very nature of all authority. The meaning of all political conquest, and the character of the people engaged in it, transpired with a startling simplicity in the pages of this pedant of crude 'power'.[12]

Although politics involves, simply, the struggle for power, Machiavelli emphasized that its ends are successfully pursued only through the use of a variety of deceptive resources that disguise its essentially brutal nature: "To be what Hotspur called a 'king of smiles,' and to go about well provided with every deadly drug, was essential, Nicolò Machiavelli was never tired of impressing on prospective Princes (especially new ones) if power was what was wanted. To have power--that is to say to become, not by right but by force, the mechanical destiny of other people--you must train your personality with a superhuman severity. You must be as slippery as the eel and as daring as the cat."[13]

What the man animated by a desire for power must do is to avoid the exposure of his motives by manufacturing an image of himself that disguises the truth in favor of something more appealing to those he wishes to manipulate. This strategy almost always enjoys success because of the disinclination among most people to suspect a discrepancy between what they see and what might exist beneath the level of their vision. Lewis cites Pasquale Villari who, in his Life and Time of Machiavelli, speaks of the difficulty in comprehending the enigma of men who were at once the patrons of culture and the perpetrators of outrageous crimes:" ' . . .to behold men who speak and think like ourselves, men who experience genuine delight before a Madonna by Fra Angelico or Lucca della Robbia, before the aerial curves of Alberti's and Brunelleschi's architecture, men who show disgust at a coarse attitude, at a gesture that is not of the most finished elegance; to behold them abandon themselves to the most atrocious crimes, the most obscene vices; to behold them using poison, etc.'--that, says Villari, is what it is difficult to understand."[14]

In contemporary society, Lewis says, the position of prestige formerly occupied by humanism is held by science. Now it is science that most often provides a cloak for malignity on a large scale, but the modern consciousness has somehow become conditioned to the discovery of this fact: "no one is, in the nature of things, so surprised to observe a man of science (engaged in what is popularly regarded as an 'inhuman' study) busy one day with the construction of a device for ensuring greater comfort to the human race and the next day contriving a machine of destruction guaranteed to wipe out at a moment's notice what he was so busy inventing the day before."[15] Humanistic culture, on the other hand, manifests qualities that seem, to the popular imagination, thoroughly inconsistent with immoral deeds of any sort: "If in place of science you have painting, philosophy and poetry, it is much more difficult to reconcile those activities, and the beautiful productions that are their result, with the madness that is inseparable from successful banking operations, and the sensational crimes by which the possession of 'power' if possible expresses itself."[16]

In the course of his discussion Lewis speaks of several men whose lives exemplify the Machiavellian tactics of duplicity. The most illustrious example in Machiavelli's own day was Cesare Borgia, an excessively unscrupulous man of action who projected, however, a civilized image calculated to enchant his victims: "Where a captain or a tyrant could, he would conquer by charm and grace as much as by arms. As a snake would rearrange its sinuous colour-pattern every morning, no doubt, if it were able to, so Cesare Borgia would get himself up 'to kill' in more senses than one."[17] A no less worthy specimen of the type is found in Frederick the Great of Prussia. One of his first acts in a long career of chicanery was to write a book expressing his aversion for all the vices described by Machiavelli. Even the author of The Prince, Lewis says, could give no better advice to the aspiring politician than to write a book denouncing the same tactics that he will inevitably come to employ himself in his pursuit of power. Frederick's long and successful career provides an incomparable demonstration of the Machiavellian guide to political success. His ruthlessness was always carefully concealed beneath the mask of a man upon whose shoulders authority had been thrust, and who sought to govern with only the utmost benevolence for all:

> Launching one terrible war after another, he never ceased to inveigh against his unlucky star that forced him into these conflicts, which were odious to his pacific nature, he would affirm. He never for a moment dropped his mask of negligent detachment from such events, or at least he never allowed it to reveal the features and expression of the bird of prey. And he was spared, by the happy circumstances of the time and place, the necessity of poisoning people; and nothing but his actions, on a great impersonal scale, and with masses of slaughtered soldiers, towns and villages destroyed and so forth (things so big that no one ever, in any period, suspects that a person or persons can be responsible for them, unless his responsibility is theatrically advertised as in the case of Attila) could ever have enlightened anyone on the subject of the true significance of this hero. Similarly he combined an invariable meanness with airs of liberality: social malignity with great politeness and the most accomodating affability.[18]

While his study of Machiavelli probably did not provide Lewis with any startling disclosures about the nature of politics, it provided a theoretical basis or rationale for his subsequent observations of political phenomena. What the author of *The Prince* so shockingly revealed in the sixteenth-century, seemed to be confirmed in every way in the twentieth. "Pretence is of the essence of much politics in all ages,"[19] Lewis says in *Rude Assignment*, and it is on this aspect of modern politics that his comments generally focus.

Putting on a seal-skin to hunt the seal

In *The Art of Being Ruled* (1926) Lewis considers the unfortunate conditions of the times that facilitate the relatively easy exploitation of the masses. There is in general, he notes, a diminishing sense of personal commitment and responsibility, and an increasing reliance on direction by others. This change is reflected in widespread standardization of thought, behavior, and appearance. It is in the interests of executive powers to promote mass regimentation, for the greater the degree of submission by people to any sort of grouping or classification, the less resistance there is to being manipulated: "The *more* classes, associations, syndics--occupational, sex, age, cultural categories--into which you can cut them up and pen them, the more manageable (for the more divided and helpless) they are."[20] The intellect and spirit of the masses may be controlled for the advantages of power-hungry executives just as the material level of existence is directed for the profit of industrial management: "The ideas of a time are like the clothes of a season: they are as arbitrary, as much imposed by some superior will which is seldom explicit. They are utilitarian and political, the instruments of smooth-running government. And to criticize them seriously, especially to-day, for themselves, would be as absurd as to criticize the fashion in loofahs, bath-mats, bath-salts, or geysers, in children's frocks or soft felt hats."[21] The submission of the masses to conventional behaviour benefits the ruling powers not only because it promotes an atmosphere of intellectual torpor, but because it may be used, more directly, as a means of exploitation. Having assisted in clothing virtually every aspect of the average citizen's existence in a variety of fashions, the executive powers of the state then put on the same fashions themselves in order to disguise their intentions. In The Diabolical Principle and the Dithyrambic Spectator (1931) Lewis compares the tactic (used against the artist by politically-motivated dilettantes) of adopting the guise of the enemy in order to infiltrate his domain and overcome him with the eskimo-hunter's method of putting on a seal-skin to hunt a seal. In the context of the present discussion the technique involves "putting on the public" in the sense of projecting an image which reflects the sentiments and ideals of the greatest number. Several of the most prominent modes of disguise in which modern politics were observed by Lewis to clothe themselves include youth-cults, feminism, science, and Christianity.

Certainly the most widespread fashion during the first few decades of the twentieth-century was to celebrate youth as a value in itself. In The Apes of God (1930), most notably in the chapter entitled "Pamela Farnham's Tea Party," Lewis satirizes this vogue as it existed among societies of sham-artists. The Doom of Youth (1932) and The Old Gang and the New Gang (1933) are devoted to consideration of the phenomenon in a political context. The Jesuits, he notes, were the first to discover the idea that an intensive method of indoctrination, carried on for the first six years of a person's life, will ensure that his subsequent behavior is thoroughly predictable. It remained for twentieth-century political movements, however, to take full advantage of this theory. The organization of youth for political purposes began in the modern period in Britain with Baden-Powell's Boy Scout Movement, which constituted a type of "juvenile militia." It appeared as a major tool in the development of Russian communism as well as in the growth of fascism in Italy and Germany. In addition to the indoctrination made possible through the organization of paramilitary youth groups, the basis for an even more widespread campaign of exploitation was laid through the promotion of what Lewis called "Youngergenerationconsciousness." The incessant flattery of youth carried on by news and advertising media had behind it, Lewis believed, the support of large commercial and political interests. It is a dangerous mistake, he warned, to suppose that such movements come about haphazardly without some positive and usually subversive intentions behind them. The Doom of Youth concludes with a rhetorical question in which Lewis reiterates his belief in the existence of a concerted plan of exploitation beneath the development of the youth cult: "The only question that remains is that question with which we started: is it done on purpose--that is to say, can such a phenomenon exist, upon such a scale, and can its promoters be unconscious of its existence? Is it certain, quite certain, that there is no political motive behind it? You know, of course, what my answer is."[22] It is inevitable that a political movement that has cultivated an emotional climate obsessed with the romantic values of youth will then seek to reflect the same values itself. Lewis recognized in British politics the insidious intentions concealed behind the mask of youth: "Youngergenerationconsciousness is merely a mask for something not at all 'young' or especially attractive (not more than other political gadgets): it is the form in which, in Anglo-saxony, a revolutionary purpose is bound to clothe itself."[23]

Lewis entertained the same suspicions about the apparent support given by big business concerns and governments to feminist movements as he did when it was given to youth groups. He saw how powerful manipulators of human destiny were able to disguise their selfish intentions by appearing to sympathize with the organized efforts of youth or women:

> It is important to remember, in connection with 'Youth-politics,' just as much as with 'Feminism,' that the motives for getting up, or for encouraging, such an agitation are never stated. Scarcely are they so much as hinted at. When recruits were being called for in the War, threats could be employed as well as Flattery (even then a great deal of Flattery was used). Also, 'To make the world safe for democracy' and such fulsome phrases were liberally coined. It was not the methods of the Press-gang--we are democratic. But these class agitations, of Sex-war or of Age-war, occur at a normal time. No abnormal pressure therefore can be exerted. So nothing but Flattery is employed. Women were harrangued to the effect that they were 'as good as men'! It was suggested that short skirts would enable them to display their legs, and that would be far more attractive--they were such lovely things and had for so long remained occulted by an obnoxious skirt. They were assured that it was only a lot of soured old maids and Mrs. Grundys who prevented skirts from going half-way up the thigh, and so on. It is very necessary to bear in mind that Flattery is the invariable instrument, in the case of a democratic and newspaper-run system, by which people are prevailed upon to undertake some 'crusade' (either to 'make the world safe for democracy,' or to 'assert their equality'). And that, once the trick is done, the cant is dropped.[24]

In seeking to govern without revealing any of the ugly signs of self-interest, the executive intelligence may borrow qualities that are normally associated with the practice of science or with allegiance to the Christian religion. Notwithstanding its tremendous accomplishments, modern science exerts on the popular imagination a romantic influence that exceeds the level of its material gains. And its recurrent claim to "objectivity" and "detachment" is frequently appropriated by those outside its field to disguise intentions which are anything but objective: "For in its impersonality and its 'scientific detachment' it is an ideal cloak for the personal human will. Through it that will can operate with a godlike inscrutability that no other expedient can give. It enables man to operate as though he were nature on other men. In the name of science people can be almost without limit bamboozled and managed."[25]

Although the practice of orthodox Christianity has obviously declined in Western societies the solicitation of Christian sentiments continues to elicit enthusiastic responses. Lewis recognized an appeal to these residual sentiments to be a major factor in the emergence of communism. There are of course realistic grounds for the comparison of communist and Christian doctrines, some of which are explored in The Red Priest and "The Bishop's Fool." But in the case of communist political movements in Britain, for example, the promulgation of traditional Christian principles, Lewis believed, was merely a technique of exploitation: "In the matter of 'religious' manifestations, the peculiar godless christianity of Anglosaxon communism is entirely meaningless: in effect it is an exploitation of the automatic christian responses and reflexes which have survived the extinction of Christianity among the western proletariate, or intelligentsia. It is concocted out of the refuse of discarded emotions, engrained in Christendom, and which cannot at once be extirpated--emotions of 'decency', of 'charity', of 'kindliness', of 'compassion', and of 'selflessness'."[26] The exploitation of Christianity for political ends is not, of course, a sin peculiar to communist organizations, and Lewis warns, in *Left Wings over Europe* (1936), that political leaders of any persuasion may project a Christian exterior in order to solicit support. In *Rude Assignment*, a book written primarily as a vindication of his work as well as of his personality, Lewis shows annoyance at having to defend himself against charges of inhuman disregard for the common man. These charges he found especially irksome when he saw himself surrounded by executive powers whose professed interest in the material and spiritual welfare of the masses was so clearly fraudulent:

> Seeing that ours has been in the West a generation of hypocrites--and of persecutory hypocrites excessively partial to blood-sports, at that: who, in changing from empire-builders into fellow-travellers, retain the old sanctimonious pretexts that it is for the *good of others* they practice violence, and clothe themselves in power, and in discarding the Bible tear out all they need of the sanctions of the Mosaic law: seeing that it is a generation that has shown less care for men in the mass than any for a great many centuries, combining this demonstrable indifference to the welfare of the generality with never-ceasing hosannas to the Common Man: a generation of power-addicts who put a red tie on with a smirk, climb upon the back of the Working Class and propose to ride it to a new type of double-faced dominion: seeing all this, that anyone should have to defend himself from charges of *insufficient regard for the ~~Many~~* is imbecile of course.[27]

The ruler and the ruled

One of the fundamental tenets of Lewis's political philosophy was that there is a fundamental division between the relatively small number who seek control over others, and the vast majority who are content to be governed. This dictum is part of a more comprehensive view of human society that recognizes a natural separation and antagonism between the vast majority and an individual who distinguishes himself from it in any way. In The Lion and the Fox, this view is expressed in the following manner:

> It is the difference, not the superiority, that is the offence or the challenge, or that involves the responsibility. Thus the ottimati or oligarchy are, for the mass of citizens, merely the same only more so: whereas the king or prince is essentially in a different category. He is the Person, the One, the responsible representative of others, and for men a very strange principle of power, qualitative instead of quantitative. The 'secret drinker' is an illustration of this: he might drink twice as much if he did not do it alone. And to wish to be alone, or to drink alone, or to do anything else alone, is the first step to the supernatural: which, in its turn, is the first step to the stake or the crucifix.[28]

In two short pieces written during the first world war, "The Crowd Master" and "The Code of a Herdsman," Lewis dramatizes the position of the individual in his relationship with the collective personalities of crowds or with masses in general. The first is concerned with the position of the individual and the crowd in a situation of mass-hysteria, and of the individual's response to mass-mobilization; the second specifically with the individual's strategy of defence against a large segment of society identified as the herd.

The "War Number" of Blast contains "The Crowd Master," an admittedly autobiographical sketch in which Lewis describes the experience of an individual who boasts of his independent spirit, but who seeks to experience the unconscious sensations peculiar to a crowd. The piece focuses on the obtuseness and pliability of the London crowds formed in anticipation of invasion in 1914, but, as Lewis explains in Blasting and Bombardiering, in this particular document the narrator is not one who seeks any sort of control over his peculiarly vulnerable fellows. What he meant by "Crowd-master," he says, reflecting on the work, was "that I was master of myself. Not of anybody else--that I have never wanted to be. I was master *in* the crowd, not master *of* the crowd. I moved freely and with satisfaction up and down its bloodstream, in strict, even arrogant, insulation from its demonic impulses."[29]

In "The Code of a Herdsman" which appeared two years after "The Crowd Master" in the Little Review one finds another character whose consciousness keeps him isolated from a mass which he calls "the herd," and who presents a set of rules by which this isolation may be maintained. While many of the twenty "rules" might seem to emanate from the mind of a machiavel, there is again little to suggest that the speaker is one who wishes to be "master *of* the crowd." The points of instruction prescribe techniques for the resolute defence of the personality against infection by the herd. For example, one should avoid adopting habits common to herds, it is argued, such as introducing a cleverness into one's speech or making use of a popular cliché. When one must emerge from the sequestered withdrawal into the self, and direct contact with the herd is unavoidable, the person must seek the protection of a mask to avoid exposure: "Always come down with masks and thick clothing to the valley where we work. Stagnant gases from these Yahooesque and rotten herds are more dangerous often than the wandering cylinders that emit them. See you are not caught in them without your mask."[30] Often the mask selected will reflect the image of the herd; faced with stupidity, for instance, one avoids recognition by putting on a mask of stupidity: "Exploit Stupidity.=Introduce a flatness, where it is required into your commerce. Dull your eye as you fix it on a dull face.=Why do you think George Borrow used such idiotic clichés as 'The beams of the descending luminary--?' He was a great writer and knew what he was doing,=Mock the herd perpetually with the grimace of its own garrulity or deadness."[31] Ideally one would have recourse to a host of evasive masks (as Lewis's famous Bailiff of the Childermass has, for purposes other than those of defence) designed to preclude any more than fragmentary disclosures of the self. The Bailiff, indeed, might have been instructed by this passage from "The Code of a Herdsman":

> Cherish and develop, side by side, your six most constant indications of different personalities. You will then acquire the potentiality of six men.

> Leave your front door one day as B.: the next march down the street as E. A variety of clothes, hats especially, are of help in this wider dramatisation of yourself. Never fall into the vulgarity of being or assuming yourself to be one ego. Each trench must have another one behind it. Each single self--that you manage to be at any given time--must have five at least indifferent to it. You must have a power of indifference of five to one.[32]

One recalls, on reading this passage, Tarr's cultivation of his "indifference" in the presence of Bertha, and his frequent efforts to remain unsullied from contact with the vulgar affairs of the world.

"The Foxes' Case," published in The Calendar of Modern Letters in 1925, deals also with the conflict between the individual and the crowd, but more especially as this conflict is related to a particular political context. Because of the popularity of the democratic principle in western countries the person who emerges from the crowd is looked upon with suspicion and even hostility. The artist, for example, can minimize the antagonism directed against him only by pretending himself to be one of the crowd; for, as Lewis explains, "since to-day life has to be humoured, and each act of the creative will has to pretend to rise spontaneously in the body of the world or of the crowd (since the democratic standards of western society as contrasted with the methods of benevolent mastery illustrated elsewhere require that every act of government should appear to be the act of the governed), then, of course, there is nothing for it: the creator has to affect to be one of the herd. . . ."[33]

In putting on the crowd the creative intelligence seeks to reflect its characteristics, which are feminine or childlike, irresponsible, and passive. Its distinctive capacity for creation must be made to appear relatively insignificant: "Or the world's stud-bull, intellectually speaking, must pretend to be a cow; or at least must disguise his function so much that he could pass for one of the herd, unless carefully examined."[34] The political leader of western societies must also avoid appearing to be in any way outstanding. He must promote the image of himself as one of the crowd. This practice, Lewis recognized, presented considerable dangers for the ruled, and in The Art of Being Ruled and other works he issued cautions on their behalf.

It is in the interests of the ruled, Lewis suggested, to counteract their own exploitation by having the possessors of authority readily distinguishable from those under their control; hence the suggestion, cited earlier, that politicians be given uniforms of identification, like other possessors of authority and power. Having these people readily identifiable is, indeed, part of "the art of being ruled," and will reduce the vulnerability to exploitation of the many by the few. Unfortunately, however, a governor often recognizes the advantages of reducing his isolation from the majority, even, indeed, of masquerading as one of them: "It often occurs (and we even have to-day a unique picture of this in contemporary western society) that the ruler becomes a confirmed practitioner of one of Haroun al Raschid's most objectionable habits, namely, that of spending his time disguised amongst his subjects as one of them. This tendency in a ruler is very much indeed to be deplored. No good has ever been known to come of it. And such an arrangement should always be resented and resisted by the ruled."[35] Lewis certainly had no liking for the ostentatious trappings of state, but he preferred an overt display of authority to the danger of power sources that remained anonymous:

> For the sake of the ruled--that is my argument--the ruler should be forced to rule by force, ostensibly, responsibly, as does (to the great disgust of our western liberals) the soviet or fascist government. That all your troubles come from that charming neighbor of yours, whose bald head you see peaceably shining in the early morning sunday sun while he waters his lawn, who is always ready with a cheery word on the weather, the holidays, the cricket score--that is what is intolerable. Riding past your modest dwelling in shining armour, at the head of a brilliant cavalcade, scowling at your name-plate on the gate, or kissing his hand to your wife as she peeps apprehensively from behind the respectfully drawn curtains--Mr. Lionel Brown, your altogether too anonymous neighbor, would be better that way. You would 'know which way to take him' then, would you not?

Lewis was witness to the emergence in Europe of both fascism and communism and of their often exaggerated ideological struggle with capitalist democracy. His particular interest in the external found him assessing, in a number of books, some of them written in the twenties and thirties, the manner in which these political entities clothed themselves, and it was his invariable conclusion that it is obscurity in the manifestation of authority that is the peculiar weakness of ostensibly democratic systems. Based on the notion of government by the majority, democracy in this sense is, quite simply, a sham, and the continued maintenance of belief in its existence leads only to a proliferation of illusions and deceit. In 1948 he summed up his conclusions in America and Cosmic Man:

> Jean-Jacques Rousseau's insistence that no government deserves the title of 'Popular Government' unless the people participate directly in the lawmaking and not through delegates or representatives should command attention. In societies so large as ours it is only by the Referendum that direct popular action can be compassed. Without that, Democracy is an anachronism. Government by 'primary' assembly, in which all the adult males have their say and cast their vote, as that prevailing among the early Teutonic tribes, is today impossible. So we work along artificially, in politics, just as in economics we retain the fiction of gold. We suffer much waste and hardship because of our accumulation of fictions, at the very heart of our social life. I do not think we should object to fiction and artifice, in reasonable proportions. It is when there is nothing that is what it affects to be any longer and our institutions and beliefs are weighed down under a murderous load of symbolism, that it is 'time for a change'. . . .[37]

Another widespread notion about modern democracy was that it somehow guarantees its citizens virtually unlimited freedom. Before the second world-war Lewis questioned the reality that the term democracy clothed: "All I am contending is that at the very best of times, the term 'democracy' is a jolly word, and not much more. There are various degrees of coercion, that is all: and the word 'democracy' is intended to convey that you are being interfered with less than under a 'despotism'. What I am saying is only a plea that we should talk a little less nonsense to each other."[38] Not only is the existence of freedom a myth but, as Lewis so often asserts, the assumption that people desire to have freedom at all is itself a romantic illusion. Lewis's chief complaint, however, is not that there is coercion in the process of governing, but that in democracies this coercion should be constantly camouflaged. One of the subtlest means by which control over people is achieved is through the surreptitious control of "public opinion." The anonymity of the power behind this control is its most potent weapon, for it tends to suggest that the responsibility for whatever unpleasant happens lies ultimately with the citizens themselves and not with their leaders.

> If you suppose that 'the manipulation and suppression of news' is confined to Italy and Germany, you are, of course, betraying a degree of obtuse credulity and childish trustfulness, not to mention an absence of the most elementary gift of observation, that really fits you for that 'indivisible' millennium that is in course of preparation on all hands!
>
> Indeed, where the control is open, the danger is far less, and the reader is far more apt to be critical. Palpably, the information he receives, and the opinions which are offered him, he receives at the hands of a recognized authority. He naturally will exercise his judgement, if he has any. He knows where he is.
>
> Whereas, in a democracy, 'Scarcely any of those who read what the paper tells them know who has written what they read, or what sources of information he possesses, or what intellectual weight. The voice seems to issue from a sort of superman, and has a hypnotic power of compelling assent.'
>
> There you have the essence of the matter. The power of a visible 'superman'--the modern 'dictator'--is as nothing to the power of this *invisible* superman.

> And such is the magic of this verbal hypnosis, what is more, that the reader ultimately comes to believe that he is himself responsible for all these opinions he finds domiciled in his consciousness.--This is what we term *public opinion*. And we are--in a democracy--very proud of this indeed. 'Public opinion' is a thing to which we attach a superstitious value.
>
> But, if these opinions insensibly incline to *war*, for instance, we sigh, and we reflect that we are after all still rather cave-men at bottom, *proper devils* in fact, when we're roused! And, as we buckle on our Sam Browne we feel rather sinister fellows.--And if at the end of 'the spot of trouble' we have no top to our heads, or a metal [ear?] or a glass eye, or possess a couple of artificial limbs, we shake our heads and sadly admit that it is after all *our* fault. We *would* go to the wars, we would--we were *just* spoiling for a fight!
>
> So the hypnotized automaton of democracy, *through not knowing that he is not free*, is, if anything, in greater danger than the plain servant of the state (servant--not 'gentleman-help' and co-partner, or any democratic make-believe of that sort). And he is in a less dignified position for he is a perpetual dupe, enslaved by *words*. 'We rule people by words!' When he said that, Disraeli was describing a typical democracy.[39]

The citizen of a democracy is placed in the peculiar position of a scapegoat for a host of injustices practiced on him by his frequently unscrupulous governors. The ruler himself realizes, of course, that he is no less the possessor of power than are the more candid leaders of rival political systems, but his appearance is calculated to negate any suggestion that he has elevated himself above the level of *his neighbors*:

> That the latest representative of western parliamentary democracy does not regard *himself* as 'decadent', or anything unpleasant of that sort, goes without saying. Very much the reverse: he seems as pleased as Punch with himself. He may not have the ostentatious trappings of power of one of these

dictator-fellows, certainly! But none the less he *feels* just as much the cat's pajamas (in his quiet and crafty way--almost, if it did not sound too disobliging, in his *underhand* way, one might describe it) as any of these swaggering quacks, dressed up to look like Napoleon or Seigfried!

But, what is more to the point, this democratic statesman possesses a well-defined, though of course not popularly advertised, policy, corresponding to the attitude outlined above. He believes--and the political journalists who follow his star will resolutely assert--that by other (by quieter and more 'constitutional') methods, he is destined to achieve all that the most successful 'fascist' has done by the crude procedure of the *coup d'état*. By more occult--more subtle and intelligent--methods, he will achieve what elsewhere has been achieved by open and clumsy methods of force. *And why use force, when it can all be done by kindness?*

Fascist revolution is not suited to the English people--such is the argument of the British parliamentary statesman and his henchmen. But the undeniable benefits of such an 'authoritarian' regime as that of Hitler or Mussolini can be secured without anyone being aware of the change! It is, in fact, quite surprising how *totalitarian* you can be without anybody so much as guessing that they are a whit less free than they were before! It is quite remarkable what insolent and 'ruthless' power you can exercise if you want to (and if that power be suitably veiled and disguised) without the man in the street being any the wiser!--or, indeed, having the slightest inkling of what you are about!

It is a question, merely, of method. At bottom it is a matter of *taste*, really, that is all.

So the democratic statesman is apt to consider himself a far more cunning and clever fellow than any of these 'Sawdust Caesars!' No need of the emblems and trappings of power--the banners, the *fasces*, the ermine and purple! All that is 'out of date' (just as colonial expeditions are 'an anachronism').

Dressed like--and indeed resembling a little--George Robey in private life, your great parliamentary leader, indistinguishable from any other 'Mr. Everyman', can pass measures of the most *revolutionary* nature. Day after day--between two rounds of golf--under the very nose of any modern democracy

> whatever, he can do this. Why, he could wipe out Magna Carta and no one would notice it: he could abolish the Habeas Corpus, and all that would happen would be that a few stuffy old clubmen who out of sheer désoeuvrement had been sullenly watching him, would write a little indignantly to *The Times*! While they are busy gaping at the All Blacks or goggling at a cup tie, he can do just what he likes with the ancient liberties of the people--just as much as old Hitler or old Mussolini could ever do.[40]

Contemporary masks

Lewis's insights into the manner in which political power clothes itself were based in part on observations of the masks of particular leaders. In the case of Hitler, Lewis himself was, as he admits later in *The Hitler Cult*, clearly "taken in" when, in 1930, he failed to see beneath the apparently harmless normality of his exterior. At that time he had written: "Adolf Hitler is just a very typical german 'man of the people'--'*Mann aus dem Volke*', just as his movement is a *Volksbewegung*. As even his very appearance suggests, there is nothing whatever eccentric about him. He is not only satisfied with, but enthusiastically embraces, his *typicalness*."[41] Indeed, he had failed to see in Hitler the harpooner beneath the sealskin, if one can use so simple a metaphor here. He had tended to regard him, in that complex period before he came to power, more as a Cantleman who was prepared "to seize the big bull of Finance by the horns, and to take a chance for the sake of freedom."[42] It was for this reason that he saw in Hitler a depressed German people "acting as one man"--"a sort of inspired and elegant Everyman"[43]--confronting "Capital Wealth [specifically international loan capital] (understood as Debt, or as Loan-power)."[44] At the same time the voice of "credit-crankery" in the person of Mr. Kirkwood was politely suggesting that "there could be no objection in that House to the theory of the living wage, because members had fixed the principle for themselves."[45] It eventually became apparent, of course, that such an estimate of Hitler's character was far from accurate. In 1939 Lewis reconsidered the problem of Hitler's personal appearance, preceding his explanation with the assertion that the external manifestation of a public figure must be thoroughly anatomized: "The Fuhrer must be taken to pieces. This engine for producing mass-emotion is very interesting indeed. And in nothing is it so interesting as in what it offers to the eye. For this is, after all, a talking-box to be seen as well as to be heard. The cut of a soap-boxer's coat, or the colour of his hair, is as important as the timbre of his voice."[46] In the process of the new analysis Lewis, by turning ironically on himself, raised the whole question of moral criteria:

> There are warlike persons who, perhaps with the intuition of the quarrelsome in recognizing another of their kind, spotted Hitler at once as a potential Tamerlane. There are some people, too, who go about looking for Tamerlanes. But heavens! what a flair a man must have to detect Tamerlane beneath that platitudinous exterior--that plebian

> protégé of the Junker Papen, with the humble cut of whose German sports-jacket, and with whose disarming tooth-brush moustache, we are all now so familiar. Still, I confess that in one respect I was badly taken in, in 1930. What more than anything else caused my judgement to trip was that unusual trinity of celibacy, teetotalism and anti-nicotine.
>
> I was cowed at the thought of such superiority to alcohol, such a contempt for tobacco, such sublime indifference to the sex-urge. Yet that there was something sinister about this pointed abstinence was elementary. I should at once have been on my guard at the spectacle of more than two major inhumanities.
>
> As it was, I allowed my suspicions to be lulled. This could not be a dangerous man--he was a crude puppet; and when he had served his turn he would be knocked on the head and popped back into his box, by his tough and wily junker masters--as came very near happening in June 1934.
>
> I gazed at Herr Hitler with complete equanimity. No one had anything to fear from so commonplace an agitator: who would probably do his stuff; clean up a social mess beyond the Rhine: put the French jingoes and armament crooks in their places, and save Europe from war--*not* bring back that boring phantom, which is what *has* happened.
>
> The argument from his abstinence was unsound. But what two things are more inseparable than alcohol and war? My experience as a soldier had established that fact firmly in my mind. And then there was no *meat* either. Somehow milk and water-cress do not *seem* to rhyme with blood and iron.
>
> Every fool knows, however, that the non-smoker and non-drinker is the most dangerous of all amorists. Here was a man who was a strict abstainer from *women* too. It was really a clear case of something *very* unpleasant indeed. But there was that anchoritic shack in the Bavarian Alps. I pictured this harmless little patriot sitting in his log-cabin and concocting his simple-hearted speeches. And then one day I saw a photograph of a gigantic spa, containing (so I read with dismay) forty bedrooms: a vegetarian spa, it is true, but a different place from the humble shack of Nazi propoganda.[47]

As he continues his analysis Lewis emphasizes how difficult it is to absorb the lesson that a terrifying lust for power can exist beneath the most commonplace exterior, in spite of what Machiavelli taught in the sixteenth century, and in spite of its verification by an increasing number of examples.

Perhaps the lesson he learned made Lewis's senses even more acute to the lack of distinction in other political figures; especially when, as in Britain, a banal exterior was often used to cloak intelligence. The illusion of stupidity in a politician, a lawyer, or a business magnate should make one extremely cautious, Lewis warns, for it is often utilized as a disarming cover for a calculating intelligence: "Some of these English games--the law, for instance--are highly intellectual. Very clever men indeed are engaged in all of them. And they are never being so clever as when they appear most stupid. (For it would never do for them to betray the presence of 'grey matter.') The whole art of the thing is to appear stupid--often, indeed, to affect idiocy. He who plays the fool most brilliantly fools most people, and gets most prizes. It is the only way."[48] Lewis refers to Baldwin as representative of the most dangerous type of politician, because his appearance and demeanor suggest an incapacity for subterfuge: "In this age of 'Unknown Soldiers,' or of 'cosy,' commonplace, Mr. Everyman--statesmen, it is with the Stanley Baldwins we should be on our guard, rather than with the 'brilliant' and spectacular Churchills. The latter are innocuous in comparison."[49] Churchill, in Lewis's opinion, did himself real harm by injudiciously exposing his intelligence, even though in his case, Lewis suggests, the extent of the offensive matter was not formidable: "That is never forgiven in a politician, and very rarely in anybody else. And after all Mr. Churchill's brains are peu de chose. You would not think anyone would mind."[50]

During the six years he spent in Canada and the United States, Lewis studied some of the more famous American political leaders. And while there was much that he admired in the American system of government, he detected the inevitable duplicity that accompanies the personal acquisition of power. Woodrow Wilson, for example, put on the mask of the "Presbyterian Priest" in his public appearances to suggest a rigid Christian consciousness, and his speeches often had the flavor of sermons: "His 'high-principled' eyes level and stern behind coldly glittering glasses; inner rectitude imparting a prim starching to the outer man; the bland glare of the dominie intimidating only the more because of the frosty political smile which, as a candidate, he wore: he must indeed have spread consternation."[51] F. D. Roosevelt he ranked as the third greatest American president because of the many benefits the country gained under his leadership, the most notable those which accrued from the New Deal. No intellectual giant, Roosevelt possessed, however, an exceptional talent for making use of the brains of his assistants, and he utilized the appeal of his personality to instil a productive vigor into the country as a whole. Along with his positive abilities as a leader of the nation existed, however, an appetite for personal power as well as the techniques to disguise it. A valuable talent in this respect was his ability as an actor. Seeing himself as a figure of historical significance, he sought to put on a mask of corresponding greatness, and in doing so would, on occasion, borrow the stern countenance of Wilson or the eloquence of Lincoln: "Mr. Roosevelt was a capital actor. He had one notable impersonation, namely that of his erstwhile master, Woodrow Wilson. It was uncommonly lifelike, even down to the austere Wilsonian mask. In some of his photographs at Big Three meetings it could be the 'Presbyterian Priest' himself one is looking at; as also in his plagiarism of the Gettysburg Address, he walked in the footsteps of a hero of his youth."[52] Both he and Theodore Roosevelt, Lewis points out, were very wealthy men who took advantage of their affluence and at the same time benefitted politically by pretending to be opposed to riches: "You overawe people with your clubmanesque airs and graces, you live at 'Hyde Park' (the name of his estate) in seigneurial style, and you derive great fame and personal advantage from denouncing the rich and all their works."[53] In America Lewis found that political power is inevitably clothed in humble virtues to make its presence more palatable to the citizenry. Because the presidents have avoided any conspicuous display of the symbols of authority, the average citizen has accepted them without question: "As to his Presidents, they have been no tyrants, certainly. Yet his attitude toward them would have been entirely different had they been dressed differently. Eliminate all the glittering paraphernalia of kingship, and everything is different. A king in a seersucker suit, who is called a 'chief executive,' is completely disarming to the romantic 'rebel' mind. He could do all the nasty things that kings do--levy taxes and make war--and no objection would be taken."[54]

Lewis's extraordinary comprehension of his environment enabled him to see the increasing need for an understanding of the principles of politics, both theoretical and practical. This need did not correspond with any natural inclination on his part, he recalls in Blasting and Bombardiering, but was simply the result of his recognition of their relevance to so many aspects of modern civilization: "Anyhow, in 1926 I began writing about politics, not because I like politics but everything was getting bogged in them and before you could do anything you had to deal with the politics with which it was encrusted. And I've got so bepoliticked myself in the process that in order to get at me, to-day, you have to get the politics off me first."[55] In addition to the considerable number of polemical works that were rooted in his war experience, Lewis made politics the principal content of two of his most important novels, Childermass and The Revenge for Love.

"Le mob c'est moi!": *Childermass*

Childermass is a satirical post-mortem on the composition of modern political leaders and those under their control. The examination is performed through the playing-out of the established roles of ruler and ruled. Patricular attention is directed toward the significance of appearances.

Satterthwaite and Pullman are made to represent the two general types into which human personality, in Lewis's view, may be divided: The relatively unconscious majority who are content to relinquish their individuality in favor of a collective identity, and the few who maintain their independence in order to exploit others or simply to retain their singularity. The exteriors of both figures are symbolic to a degree that is typical of Lewis's characterization. Frequent references to the combination of physique and clothing as their "shells" enforces other indications that their exteriors are established and so characteristic of their type that they have become almost natural adjuncts, not only to their personalities, but to their physical essences as well. This idea is explored at some length in the episode that dramatizes Satters' rebellious impulse to disrobe, and in the ensuing debate about the implications of the clothes in which both Satters and Pullman are dressed.

Satters' physical characteristics represent the childishness in contemporary society that Lewis describes in *Time and Western Man* and *The Art of Being Ruled*. He is, quite simply, an overgrown child, and the description of his obesity and smell is calculated to disgust: "It is the sticky vegetable odour of small babies in a close room, a distillation of the secretians and excrements of the earliest human life. It is Satters' smell, the new smell that Satters has. Taking him by the arm he feels the warmth of elastic animal matter in big thick-meated resistant layers beneath his fingers but his friend's face is fastened stupidly upon the gilded cock, a wide-eyed suckling. The wet cherry-mouth has burst open and displays its juicy fibres."[56]

Satters infantile behavior throughout The Human Age is consistent with his physique. His clothing is equally symbolic, associating him with the popular ideal of the public-schooled, decorated military hero and amateur sporting enthusiast: "Satterthwaite is in knee-cords, football stogies, tasselled golf stockings, a Fair Isle jumper, a frogged mess jacket, a Mons Star pinned upon the left breast, and a Rugby cap, the tinsel rusted, of out-size, canted forward."[57] Satters' outfit is a combination of uniforms that may not, ironically, be appropriate to himself or any other specific individual (in the same way that the average weight of ten people may not correspond with the weight of any one of them), but constitutes instead a corporate image of the period. It is only an insignificant, albeit amusing, fact that he is not entitled, as he points out, to wear such articles as the Mons Star or the Rugby cap. He notes with amazement, however, that they fit him perfectly, and although at first he protested strongly against wearing them, he says, he has now "got used to this along with the rest. . . ."[58] The incident recalls the example Lewis gives in Time and Western Man, which I cited earlier, of the absurdity revealed in the dilemma of a woman adjusting to the initial discomfort of a new skirt imposed on her by fashion. Satters' comprehensive attire is, of course, a satiric allusion to the processes of conformity to which modern society has been subjected. His prophetic comment, "I suppose in the end we shall get more suitable,"[59] is subtly ironic if the meaning of "suitable" is recognized to embrace ideas associated with clothing (as in "to suit" meaning "to clothe," as well as "to arrange in a series") in addition to its common denotation of "agreeable." A further point related to Satters' exterior is made when the medal thumping on his chest produces a hollow sound from within: "'One would say one was hollow!' he says. He delivers a blow in the neighborhood of the Star. 'Sounds somehow empty doesn't it?' Again he strikes, and listens."[60] Satters' discovery suggests the extent to which a preoccupation with the exterior has produced, through a process of "excavation" (as Lewis puts it in The Mysterious Mr. Bull), little more than an empty shell.

Pullman's attitude to Satters' concern with his appearance is generally condescending. In reply to his astonished comments on how well his clothing fits, Pullman says: "A tree is known by its fruit they say!"[61] Although the statement is cast in the form of a stale cliché extended merely in sarcasm, it expresses a point of view that is especially pertinent in this context, particularly when related to Lewis's theories concerning the "chemistry of personality" expounded in The Wild Body, and outlined earlier in this study. In the host of clichés dealing with the external as indicative of the internal, the ones denying the relationship--"You can't tell a book by its cover", "Beauty is only skin deep"--are more generally approved. Lewis's work often seeks to contradict the notion that the external is an unreliable clue to what lies beneath by creating figures whose exteriors do in fact reflect their personalities.

Satters' sudden rebellious impulse to remove his trappings provides the occasion for probing further the significance of his clothing. When his almost panic-stricken attempts to dissuade Satters from undressing fail, Pullman's only recourse is to abandon him to his foolish intentions. Satters strips himself completely, although he encounters some difficulty in the removal of his boots which, "imbued with the privileged sense almost of a skin,"[62] stubbornly resist separation from his feet. What is finally presented to Pullman's view as Satters rejoins him is a wildly animated carcass: "A formidable elongated bladder of meat, Satters cloppers up his arms flapping fin-like as he runs, useless paddles of dough beating the air up into invisible suds. The red trunk is dark with hair marking its symmetric duality."[63] Pullman's initial objection to Satters nudity is aesthetic; "the thing itself" is simply objectionable to his visual tastes. But he goes on to debate with Satters the more complicated question of the physical limits of the human body and the relevance of its extensions:

> 'There is the proposition however Satters: those are the terms on which we exist, it seems. It's no use kicking what's the point anyway? Once I left this stick at my kip when I went out. I might as well have left my head! I soon went back for it I promise you! That's the way it is. We are organic with the things around us. This piece of cloth'--he takes up a pinch of his coat sleeve--'is as much me as this flesh. It's a superstition to think the me ends here.' He taps the skin of his hand. 'Even you are a part--as you remarked I was despatched to you! I am a messenger.'
>
> 'It's very obliging of you I'm sure!'
>
> 'Not at all I can't help it!--When I first came here I was afraid to clean my nails I didn't know what was me and what wasn't. I do it all right now but I had to find out.'
>
> 'Rot. You talk rot, you're not right, you don't mind me telling you I hope! I've never heard a man talk such goddam Bedlam rot as you do. It's you who listen to what people tell you not me my poor old son you're potty. Clean your nails! Why shouldn't we leave off our coat if it's too hot to wear it? It's easy to leave off one's coat, it's not a difficult feat and what the odds to any one?'
>
> 'Yes, it's easy to leave off. But you leave yourself too.'[64]

The ruthlessly impersonal description of the naked Satters as an "elongated bladder of meat" gives support to Pullman's argument, as does the passage describing Pullman's attempt to reintegrate the identity of his companion through the retrieval of his clothing:

> The obese mass still plunged in unconsciousness is scarcely present to his senses. He passes it and

> soon reaches the spot where the cap, the Fair Isle jumper, the Mons Star, the stogies, the army cords, the frogged mess-jacket, are strewn. He collects them. Then he returns in the direction of the aged animal carcass in combination with which they result in his present chum who has disappeared and can never be his naked self in this enchantment it is painfully evident. He kneels down beside the body, it is lying upon its face: he turns it over roughly upon its back and pinches the fungus-flesh of the unsightly ears.[65]

The satiric intention of such passages is to explore the nature of clothing as an extension of the human body: Satters has indeed suffered a loss of physical identity with the removal of his clothing and has been reduced to a nondescript mass of flesh.

Satters' clothing has social and philosophical implications as well. Pullman's often vague but urgent insistence that Satters be content with the outfit provided implies that for Satters' type the maintenance of a group-personality is merely consistent with reality. Although far from ideal in a humanistic sense, the standardized identity provided for Satters, symbolized by his dress, is perhaps better for him than having no identity at all. It seems, according to Pullman's view, that for those lacking the existential responsibility that enables them to form their own personalities, collective ones are an expedient alternative.

The undetermined source of Satters' clothing provides another target for the political satire in Childermass. Both Satters and Pullman refer repeatedly to "they" without ever identifying the antecedent of the pronoun:

> Satters: 'I don't believe they know what they're handing out half the time.'[66]
> Pullman: 'I'm telling you what they say that's all.'[67]
> Pullman: 'It's best to have them on, that's all, they prefer it here.'[68]

Lewis points here to the general obscurity which cloaks the ultimate sources of power in government, as well as to the common practice of giving authority to an assumed collective opinion. A similar point is made in The Apes of God when he creates Pierpoint, the illusive but infallible voice of authority in matters of art. While Satters lacks any understanding of his posthumus existence, Pullman seems to comprehend its general import, although he does not indulge in what would only be a futile explanation to Satters. In reply to Satters' complaint that "we're held down to this magic we are enslaved,"[69] he is content to suggest that the techniques of management in their previous existence were equally subtle, and its victims equally unsuspecting: "But why magic? Use your intelligence. Did you say magic--magic, all the time, in life? You never thought of it then yet you should have said magic then just as much shouldn't you or don't you see that? You think it far-fetched. Wasn't life just as much magic?"[70]

Satters is, through his physique and attire, the primary satiric butt in the first section of Childermass. He is considered by Pullman, whose reactions to him are normally those of impatience and disgust, to have very little in his favor: "Pullman looks over patiently at the big furrowed and perspiring brow, the chaotic locks, of Satters the dunce, the Owl of the Remove, the chump, the bufflehead who is always bottom."[71] And yet, like most of Lewis's satiric victims, Satters is given his moments of dignity and triumph: he shows some admirable independence in the stripping scene in Childermass, for example, and he manages to survive, despite Pullman's abandonment of him, the hostile environments of Monstre Gai and Malign Fiesta.

Although intellectually superior, Pullman is not exempt from the satiric spectrum in which Satters is examined. While he recognizes that his physical essence extends to his personal surroundings, he does not seem to be aware at this point that his personality has formed a shell that is as typical as Satters' outfit. Like Tarr in his criticism of Hobson, Pullman is quick to recognize in others the submission to conventionality, but slow to recognize it in himself. He is very small and frail, though agile, with dry flesh and thinning hair. His physique is a perfect contrast to the clumsy, pink hulk of his companion. He wears a slightly shabby, dull grey suit that is finely tailored, and he carries a stick that he often hugs. Pullman displays as well an extraordinary degree of composure; during the fight with

Satters, in which he plays David and Chaplin to Satters' Goliath and Keystone Cops, he is never ruffled: "No normal detail of his equipment has been shed: his glasses are upon his nose, his stick is safely beneath his arm. . . ."[72] Pullman bears the stereotyped exterior, in short, of a very conventional, studious, and mature English schoolmaster. And it is an exterior that he maintains in Third City, where he finds, with some difficulty, the most conservative wardrobe available. Pullman should not be allowed to have his motives in this matter go unsuspected, because there is no denying the fact that the maintenance of conventional exteriors works to his advantage. He is told that his allowance will be increased after his new clothes indicate the social status he established on earth, and he takes full advantage of his reputation to enjoy privileged treatment in Third City and Angeltown.

As the scene moves to "the camp," the political satire is directed toward an examination of the ruler and his relationship with the public. The action is centered around the antics of the Bailiff, who makes one of his regular appearances to decide the fate of those seeking admittance to Third City. The entire episode is framed as a theatrical performance, a characteristic technique that Lewis employed in his satire to emphasize the artificiality of what is being described. Examples of this technique that occur frequently in political polemics reflect his particular scorn for the falsities of the political arena.

Lewis observed that, in general, people react to politics in the same way they react to all human activity outside their own experience; that is, as a game played for their entertainment. With this knowledge in mind, the shrewd politician is encouraged to respond to this childish attitude, and a tacit arrangement between spectators and performers is maintained. Rotting Hill contains a chapter in which Lewis describes the English parliament as the"Talking Shop," a place visited by Londoners in the same spirit as they visit the Zoo or the Tate gallery to enjoy at their leisure another form of entertainment supposedly unrelated to their own lives. And what they receive is a meaningless performance calculated to satisfy their expectations: "If you think of a caricatural cricket match, with a run or so every half-hour, bowling unlimited, with only token batting to enable the bowler to perpetuate his gentlemanly bombardment--a match in which the majority of the fielders lie down and watch the batsman and the bowler, with a periodic chorus of 'Oh, well played, sir!'--or to show we are socialists now, a massive proletarian bellow: such a game as that would approximate to the parliamentary tempo."[73] In Hitler the English parliament is compared to a Punch and Judy show played for the benefit of the entire population: "It was at times highly dramatic, and great actors have trod that model parliamentary british stage. The English People were the spectators--the actors were invariably members of the ruling-class. But, for the purposes of the plot, the actors were conventionally divided in two great factions, called Tory and Whig--the latter gentleman pretending to be in a great rage (or a 'towering passion') with the former because they were so very 'conservative.'"[74] But the puppet show analogy, Lewis indicates, is applicable as well to the governments of other countries: "The Punch and Judy of the Whig and Tory was of the same order of humbug, neither less nor more, as the 'Dictatorship of the Proletariat.' The Czar Stalin is the dictator, and he says 'Le Proletariat, c'est moi!' American Democracy is another political façade of that sort. Stalin's democracy is suited for ex-serfs, Hoover's for anglo-saxon traditions of 'the home of the brave and the free' order."[75]

After 156 pages during which Pullman and Satters occupy the stage, the centre of attention shifts to the Bailiff as the latter makes a dramatic entrance described in terms that establish the theatre as the controlling image:

> Two characters who have occupied the opening scene, they conventionally stand aside to observe the entrance of the massed cast in stately procession, Pullman's manner suggests; withdrawing discreetly a little into the mist, and peering at the massive business of the show as it unfolds itself at the centre of the stage of the Miracle heralded by the sudden detonation of a solitary furious trumpet. Are they observed by their stately silent fellow-actors? Nothing indicates that this is the case.

> If so, their personal affairs are effaced, as, in attitudes of stylized attention, marking the coming of the new event with whispered asides, they stand for the time being aloof puppets.[76]

The gathering place contains a large auditorium similar in plan to an ancient theatre, with a hemicycle of seats occupied now by the petitioners and their friends as well as by a much greater number who attend merely to be entertained. A sanded path and orchestra separate the foremost seats from the stage, upon which, decorated with a conglomeration of obscure symbols, is a lofty Punch-and-Judy theatre.

The figure of the Bailiff is Lewis's richest satiric creation, for he demonstrates, through his fantastic personality, virtually every lesson in politics that is to be found in Lewis's polemical works. The Bailiff is a corporate image of our civilization. He is the ultimate political figure because of his unrestricted capacity to "put on" the public. His public mask, which has the magical quality of a mirror, takes on the aspect of everyone towards whom it is directed. The ability to readily alter one's appearance, an actor's ability, is the most valuable talent for the politician. The "transitional society of today," Lewis says in Time and Western Man, "is essentially an actor's world. The successful personality of the moment is generally an actor-mind (Mussolini): with all the instincts bred behind the footlights, the apotheosis of the life-of-the-moment, of exteriorality, display and make-up; and of an extreme instability, fundamental breaks and intermittences, the natural result of the violent changes of, and the return of great chaotic violences into, our time."[77] The Bailiff's performance in Childermass includes the playing of diverse roles calculated to reflect the various segments of his audience.

As the Bailiff proceeds to his box he is seen to resemble the commedia dell' arte figure of Pulcinella or Punch: "Tapping on the flags of the court with a heavy stick, his neck works in and out as though from a socket, with the darting reptilian rhythm of a chicken. His profile is balanced, as he advances, behind and before by a hump and paunch. He wears a long and sombre caftan."[78] On another occasion he is found "in the attitude of a carved rooster of bulbous red, conceived as congested in the act to crow. . . ."[79] Pulcinella's name is derived from Pullus Gallinaceus and Pullicinello, a nickname meaning "the hen" given to his father because of his habits of hopping about and of making the sound of a frightened chick.[80] More important than his association through his grotesque appearance and eccentric mannerisms, the Bailiff has the quick wit and the facility for disguise that were enjoyed by Pulcinella. Pulcinella's greatest talent was his flexibility in assuming various roles. It is also worth noting that one of Pulcinella's particular roles was that of a magistrate. But he was "regarded as the representative of an entire people," Allardyce Nicoll says, "and the identification of Punch with a whole community in itself testifies to the nature of his being."[81] His audience actually took delight in witnessing his constant changes, Nicoll goes on to say, and "never worried although one day Pulcinella came forward as a cowardly credulous fool and the next as a bold, vicious and successful rogue."[82] The petitioners in the camp are similarly undisturbed, and even amused, by their magistrate's capacity to play a variety of roles, and the Bailiff himself makes casual reference to his mutability as simply an indispensable part of his job: "I have to be up and down and in and out, more or less, less and more of me you will readily understand as circumstances dictate--one day a salmon and the next day a toad-poll, perhaps, a snake or anything it's all one. . . ."[83] Included in the incredible number of masks adopted by the Bailiff are those of the efficient administrator, entertainer, wit, schoolmaster, uncle, tragic victim, father, minister of God, champion of the masses, artist, common man--the variations are virtually unlimited.

The Bailiff's performance begins with some ingratiating remarks to the audience, followed by the assumption of a serious, business-like attitude. An ironically long-winded, pedantic assurance that he is present to administer to their needs with the utmost efficiency brings an eager round of applause, and the Bailiff's countenance alters briefly to indicate polite acknowledgement of this outburst of uninvited approval:

> Slowly driving out the decorous pomp of his magisterial manner, a half-baffled grin develops upon his face. A flush like the traditional red of anger makes its varnish glisten and redden. A retrograde movement of the hair gives suddenly a feline cast to the grinning, watching, incredulous mask. Leaning to one side upon the crutch or bludgeon which he has taken from its corner when rising to speak, slowly rolling his heavily-squinting eye up and down the side of his nose, he suffers the interruption attending on his marked popularity. When the response has subsided he bows and smiles in acknowledgment. A thick light of servile buffoonery illuminates his face. Then the mask of Punch-like decorum and solemnity is reinstated.[84]

While maintaining a serious tone, however, the Bailiff employs a crude analogy to explain the appellants' entry into the place (forced "peristaltically" through a circular gate after a process of digestion), and his quip has the desired effect of titillating some members of the audience who almost explode in the suppression of their giddy laughter.

In a further diversion the Bailiff employs the techniques of the film theatre: the crowd is entranced as the lights are turned down, what appear to be diverse images become one as they are brought closer, sound is added to the image, and a series of exotic scenes are presented in succession. At the conclusion the audience expresses its gratitude: "eyes everywhere are dutifully lighted up, hands clapped, everything is one writhing spasm of appreciation."[85] There is only slight confusion, as they inquire whether the bird that was featured in the show was "real" or not. The Bailiff's ambiguous reply, indicating that it was "not real but quite real enough" satisfies them, however. The satiric intent of this scene draws attention to the promotion by executive intelligences of film and television as pleasing devices to divert the masses from their own existential concerns. It also suggests the benefit to be gained by the leader through his association with the appealing magic of modern technology, while the viewer is conditioned to assume an increasingly passive role. In the episode cited above the petitioners are all "diminished," it is noted, through the effect of the darkness in which they are enclosed and the dazzling light at the focal point of the spectacle.

When he resumes his speech the Bailiff assumes the role of the school-master engaged in a scientific explication of the situation as his listeners assume poses of attention. At one point a member of the infantile group immediately in front of the Bailiff puts up his hand in a request to "leave the room," but he is tactfully reminded that he is not actually in school: "At length the Bailiff smiles over at him, avuncular solicitude puckering the jolly features of Uncle Punch."[86] Reference to the combined roles of schoolmaster and uncle connect the Bailiff with the British Broadcasting Company's "Children's Hour," a programme that was considered crucially important in the formative years of the radio system. The Bailiff's adoption of the role again points to the opportunity for exploitation that is available through the new technology. Once again the Bailiff's words are greeted with uncontrolled enthusiasm, and a reciprocal joining-in by the celebrant in the festive mood: "The demonstration continues and is watched by the Bailiff with evident pleasure . Uncle Punch amongst his jolly children!--the solemn mask is off, the satiric on. He is all grinning vulpine teeth, puckered eyes, formidable declination of the ant-eating nose, rubicund cheeks, eyes of phosphor. The goatee waggles on the glazed bulbous chin; it is the diabolics of the most ancient mask in the world exalting in its appropriate setting."[87] The satiric pose is suddenly cast aside in favor of the tragic, however, and the change in mood is registered in the audience as effectively as if an orchestra leader were controlling his players: "With an effort he repudiates the satiric grimace. As his face changes the audience becomes hushed. The tragic mask casts its spell, as well, upon him: as he feels it coming down over his skull and its awful shadow gathering upon his face he becomes another, the tragical, person."[88]

The next interruption, which introduces the Bailiff's arch-rival, Hyperides, gives the Bailiff the opportunity to assume several more roles. Although privately he welcomes the arrival of the opposition, his first public reaction is to play the protective father lamenting the loss of time caused by the Hyperideans: "This my children is the way the day always begins! What am I to do? I implore you to tell me! I have protested against the method imposed on us here of free debate. It isn't that I mind discussing these matters, they are most interesting--I know not to you but to me they are: and as you are aware, I think, I am all for freedom of speech, no one more so. Everything fair square and above-board is my motto and always has been let God be my witness! I don't regard you as my clients but as my friends."[89] The Bailiff is also able, by exploiting the opposition of the rival faction, to establish himself as a fellow-victim whose unenviable task is carried out in spite of the brutish attacks on his person.

At various points in his wrangle with Hyperides the Bailiff puts on the mantle of the Christian servant of God, referring to himself several times as a simple shepherd engaged in the care of his flock. Because he is humbly performing God's will, he says, an attack on him is virtually an attack on God himself. A further extension of this role occurs when the Bailiff plays the warrior driven by righteous anger to an attack on the forces of chaos: "The Bailiff turns to the audience a blood-reddened 'fighting-face'; the glands of combat advertised in the Bulldog Drummond out-thrust of the head, locked-to in nutcracker toothless death-grip--veteran of a thousand sham-fights upon dire forensic or financial fields--but above all in the wennish cyst of the nuque bloated in verbal battle, while the eyes flash righteousness."[90]

In dealing with Hyperides the Bailiff assumes poses that are clearly contradictory: at one point he is the defender of the crowd against the traditionally unpopular principle of individuality, and at another he assumes the principle himself in an effort to absorb it. After frequently winning the approval of the crowd by characterizing the Hyperideans' disrupting assertions as self-indulgent, the Bailiff seeks to appropriate the Hyperideans advantages as well by comparing himself with their mentor, Socrates. A similar tactic is employed in his handling of Potter, the painter. The Bailiff points to the fundamental peculiarity of the artist and the eccentricities that set him apart from the rest of the community in such a way that he invites ridicule from the crowd. And yet, after Potter is passed in (because his foolishness in the absence of materials will probably be harmless), the Bailiff almost immediately adopts the pose of the artist himself, engaged in a heroic struggle with his material:

> Breathing heavily, his lower lip thrust out, with symptoms of acute mental discomfort, he labours secretly with a pencil-stump, screening his activity schoolboy-fashion under the pentroof of a fat

> hand. Like the butt of a stogy-cigar his tongue sticks out from the corner of his mouth, he grinds and rolls it. Every moment his breathing becomes more oppressive. Straightening himself for a moment he squints evilly down his nose at something near the poised pencil. Then once more writhing and blowing he flings himself down, horizontal-chested and hump-on-high while his hand works upon the surface of the paper up and down and in and out.[91]

The passages cited immediately above dramatize a technique that Lewis often recognized in the actions of public figures, who will attack those displaying qualities antagonistic to the staid majority on one occasion, and at some other time will pretend to have those very qualities themselves. The Bailiff, in this respect, demonstrates the tactics of the "king of foxes" or the "Man of the World" as described in "The Foxes' Case." Having for his traditional enemies such figures as the priest, the high-brow, the hero, and the artist, the "Man of the World" is possessed of every stratagem for absorbing in defeat anyone who threatens his position: "When he has temporarily reduced one or other to silence or surrender, he steps smartly into their place, and with his ape-like and child-like characteristics, sets himself to discharge their functions. Those that he finds too difficult he affects to forget or turns into ridicule."[92]

When the Bailiff is reduced, on occasion, to savage violence he shows great skill in divesting himself of the blame. After his covert directive to Mannaei results in the decapitation of Barney, the Bailiff transfers the guilt to his "overzealous servant," expressing his personal horror that such a mistake should have occurred: "All I ask you, my children, is to believe me when I tell you that I would give anything I possess--which is not much, I am bound to say not much--I am only a poor man like yourselves--for this not to have happened!"[93]

What we witness throughout most of the Bailiff's appearance on stage is a demonstration in the techniques of the political leader in his public role. There is, however, a private conversation between the Bailiff and Hyperides in which some of the subtleties of governing are revealed directly. In response to Hyperides' complaint that his appearance is inconsistent with his function, the Bailiff says (in words that might have come from "The Code of a Herdsman") that his disguises are a protection: "I would not be my own equal for worlds, I would not contaminate myself by being myself with these carrion."[94] Furthermore, the Bailiff explains, his clownish attire serves to reduce the handicap he would have to operate under if his appearance was consistent with his position. Hyperides' reply shows that he understands the well-established tactic used by the ruler to conceal his superiority from his subjects as much as possible: "What I understand you to say is that, given what men in the average are and their native hatred of excellence, then even a presentable human form symbolizes too much--that, called upon to be symbolic, the wise man would choose the most unpleasant body he could find?"[95] The Bailiff merely smiles in acknowledgement.

As for the ruled, the Bailiff makes the fundamental assertion that people are much more vulnerable to exploitation when they are part of a group or class. Therefore (as Lewis so often explains), it is in the interests of men of power to encourage class-consciousness: "The more you can invent *classes* or excite to *consciousness* those already in existence, the more you isolate men from each other? Hence--on the analogy of the cast-iron caste-system so successfully imposed upon the Hindu--the easier they are to govern."[96] It is quite evident that the conditions in the camp, for the unscrupulous and talented governor, have been made (as a satiric device, of course) almost ideal, for the appellants have been refined to an even greater degree of submissive uniformity than was the case in their earthly existence. The fellow-petitioners with whom Satters and Pullman mingle in a communal promenade during intermission are like robots: "Those they meet in the same situation as themselves are from every class and of all ages but tend to a uniformity that is strictly *passionel* and that confers upon them the cachet of a social class. Their class-life dominates them so that their responses to alien stimulus would be impersonal class-responses, or such as are proper to their prescribed function."[97] Once the crowd of petitioners is thoroughly defined and predictable, the Bailiff has only to assume their common aspect himself in order to absorb them. His intentions in this respect are made clear when, in reference to his relationship with the petitioners, he says (privately to Hyperides): "*Le mob c'est moi!*"[98]

In his private interview with Hyperides and in his performance before the petitioners the Bailiff emerges as the consummate political figure in Lewis's fiction. His creation is the offspring of the theories of governing that Lewis first articulated in *The Lion and the Fox*, and the observations he made of contemporary politicians. The subtle methods employed to clothe the populace in a variety of clichés that standardize their mentality and behavior, as well as those employed subsequently to clothe the executive powers in the image of their subjects, are revealed in *The Art of Being Ruled* and "The Foxes' Case." The Bailiff is shown in the act of exercising these techniques by constantly adapting his appearance to reflect as many of his naive petitioners as possible. In his person he dramatizes the distressing reality that government involves, essentially, the securing of power by putting on the public.

"Political realism": *The Revenge for Love*

The Revenge for Love, written approximately ten years after *Childermass*, explores the political atmosphere of the thirties among certain classes of Btitish society. Although the immediate historical setting is the involvement of Communist sympathizers in the Spanish civil war, the war itself or its principal leaders are outside the range of the novel. Lewis chose instead to dramatize the effects of the policital climate on various individuals: among them the ostensible "hero" who is directly involved in the events of the war, the pseudo-intellectuals who engage in "parlour-politics," the crafty opportunists who take advantage of political turmoil, and the innocent victims whose lives are tragically altered by their association with these types.

The political content of the novel clearly emerges from Lewis's reflections on the conflict of political ideologies in the thirties. Left Wings over Europe: or How to Make a War About Nothing, published the year before The Revenge for Love, contains Lewis's impressions of the state of contemporary European politics. The people of Europe are being led toward another terrible war, Lewis asserts, by the unscrupulous exponents of differing political beliefs. His intention in writing the book, he says, is to awaken his readers to the simple realities beneath the host of illusions manufactured by particular leaders and by the press. The average citizen should be made to realize, he argues, that he is often the unsuspecting victim of the self-motivation that is concealed beneath every political ideology. However attractive the particular theories of communism, fascism, or capitalist democracy might be, some degree of selfishness and hunger for power will always exist among those who claim to put them into practice. The example of their own leaders should in itself make people in Britain cautious about lending support to the exponents of another system: "We quite understand that--the dope and the claptrap apart--our 'national' party politicians . . . would be quite prepared to 'affiliate' themselves with the devil, if some powerful financial group persuaded them that money could be lent to hell very advantageously."[99]

One of Lewis's principal concerns in writing Left Wings over Europe was the development of amicable relations with Russia that were taking place out of a fear of fascism when, it seemed obvious, there was at least as much to fear from communism as from fascism. People are being deluded in the case of communism, Lewis argues, because they are so absorbed with communist theory that they fail to look at the more important problem of its administration: "Obviously no theory in itself matters a row of pins: it is the people who adopt it and work it that matter. So, even if you are attracted by some aspect--or by all--of communist theory, you might at least give yourself the trouble to have a good straight look at the individuals who are affecting to put it into practice."[100] And what is to be discovered from a close examination of those currently in authority, Lewis says, is that they are far from equal to the ideals they profess to embody:

> I fear that this may sound offensive to many people who regard the personnel of this indescribable *mafia* as demigods. But what on earth is one expected to do but protest against this failure of eyesight--for it is that? How can anyone in their senses and with a good pair of eyes in their head suppose (however much the publications which pour out of the House of gollancz seek to convince them of it)--once he has had a good hard look at the photographs of Mr. Litvinov and his associates--that these men are *saviors*! How can anyone be so lacking in elementary good sense as to suppose that people of this type are running the communist international for anybody except their own sweet selves and their masters? Who can be so naive as to suppose that such people as these are concerned with the *beaux yeux* and snub noses of the Russian 'masses'? It is an astounding delusion.[101]

In *The Revenge for Love* several types representative of involvement in the international communist movement are brought into conflict. Although immediately relevant to communist politics, the novel constitutes a probe into the realities of political activity in general.

Lewis creates, as a satiric technique, a tension between the romantic and the real. The original title, "False Bottoms," alludes to the use of a motif and emphasizes the tension that pervades the whole atmosphere of the novel: objects such as the car driven by Victor and the basket delivered by Josefa de la Asunción have false bottoms; the faces of Don Alvaro and Salmon are false; and the ultimate truth about many characters and incidents is obscured by an appearance that is spurious. Related to the false bottom motif, and reinforcing the air of unreality that permeates the book, is the characteristic Lewisian use of theatrical terminology to describe, in particular, the people or events related to politics.

Percy Hardcaster is the central figure of the novel and the character in whom many of the subtle realities of politics are explored. Coming from a lower class environment, he has gained the reputation of a "man-of-action" in the front lines of the communist movement: "Percy's standing would have gratified any man in the Left-wing game--he stood high with all these eminent Partymen of the Peninsula. He was one of them. He was looked up to as an organizer of parts, a man of good party-brains. And they knew he did not funk a shot or two on the quiet, at need. They had all heard how he had potted at a tax-collector from a tree-top. He had told them."[102] Having acquired it, Percy cultivates his notoriety by exploiting any potentially sensational situation, as he demonstrates in his account of the Spanish incident.

Percy approaches politics as if it were a game involving certain well-established techniques of deception: "Bluff stood in the same relation to the revolutionary expressionism as does sangfroid to the pugnacity of the duellist. The bogus in the bursting uplift it was that made it intellectually bearable. It made it a game--as a game only it was acceptable, once you'd got used to it."[103] This attitude of detachment operates as a psychological buffer when fate operates to his disadvantage, as on the occasion of his second confinement in Spain:

> Percy Hardcaster knew his place. No illusions with regard to abstract justice troubled the upright cynicism of his outlook. He 'played the game.' As ever, with an incorruptible mind, he remained a true 'sportsman.' To himself, at least, he never pretended that he was hardly used. He accepted, for his political opinions, the status of a game--a game, of course, of life and death. He would have been more the 'happy warrior' certainly, in the class-battle, if he had been possessed of a more dishonest mind. But fresh hardships only seemed to have the effect of seasoning his vision. His integrity stiffened after each fresh buffet of fate. He looked out more bleakly upon life, seeing it steadily, seeing it whole, and computing his handicap to millimetre. There was even a certain crisp logic about finding himself back in a Spanish prison which appealed to him--it was so grim that it had a logical fitness.[104]

Despite his own psychological conditioning, however, a painful conflict between the public and private personality of the man is made evident early in the narrative.. Percy displays a mask or shell that is an ideal composite of all the cliches of the "hero" in the forefront of the action, and yet beneath the "hard boiled outcast shell" he is a sensitive individual with a natural aversion for action. His confinement in jail is for the possession of "someone else's dynamite" rather than for any overt act on his part. And the anxiety he suffers over the anticipated dangers of the escape attempt breaks down the tough exterior he tries to maintain in every situation: "As it was, the misgivings expressed by Serafin had had three solid hours to take action, tending to liquifaction, upon cuticle and upon intestine: then the oppressive heat had not improved matters. Liquefaction was complete. Percy was an aqueous shell."[105] The novel concludes with an exceptionally poignant scene in which Percy experiences a profound conflict between his authentic emotions and his professional pose. An impulsive urge to rescue the Stamps regardless of the danger to himself has resulted in his incarceration. Finding himself once again in an opportune setting, Percy is in the midst of a flawless performance when the memory of Margo's innocent strength penetrates his professional veneer:

> Swollen with an affected speechlessness, Percy proceeded to give a sculpturesque impersonation of THE INJURED PARTY. His cell-mates watched him surreptitiously, with an admiration it was out of their power to withhold. Heavily clamped upon his brick-red countenance, held in position by every muscle that responded to Righteous Wrath, was a mask which entirely succeeded the workaday face. It was the mask of THE INJURED PARTY (model for militant agents in distress). Obedient to the best technique of party-training, he sustained it for a considerable time.
>
> But meanwhile a strained and hollow voice, part of a sham-culture outfit, but tender and halting, as if dismayed at the sound of its own bitter words, was talking in his ears, in a reproachful singsong. It was denouncing him out of the past, where alone now it was able to articulate; it was singling him out as a man who led people into mortal danger, people who were dear beyond expression to the possessor of the passionate, the artificial, the unreal, yet penetrating, voice, and crying to him now to give back, she implored him, the young man, Absolom, whose life he had had in his keeping, and who had somehow, unaccountably, been lost, out of the world and out of Time! He saw a precipice. And the eyes in the mask of THE INJURED PARTY dilated in a spasm of astonished self-pity. And down the front of the mask rolled a sudden tear, which fell upon the dirty floor of the prison.[106]

While Percy struggles with the painful duplicity in his own make-up, he is perfectly consistent in his understanding of the nature of politics. While playing the role of the political activist in the public spotlight, or in private conversation with acquaintances in the communist movement, he is always confidently astute.

Percy's rational approach to politics is contrasted with the merely romantic involvement of Gillian Phipps and her circle. Gillian represents the scores of people in the twenties and thirties who assumed for a time the superficial aspects of communism. Much of the enthusiasm for the fashionable popularity of communist politics, Lewis believed, was generated by socially prestigeous groups at British universities. In The Writer and the Absolute he notes that George Orwell "succumbed to the fashionable pink rash"[107] during his days at Eton. And in "The Bishop's Fool," Lewis relates, Father Rymer had a "pink period" early in his career:

> He is of the generation of the great fellow-travellers of the 'twenties, who painted the universities pink. But it was a solemn rag, a generational badge, and meant no more than a painter's stunt, painting for a little all red or all blue, to make a 'period' with. Rymer like scores of thousands of others, had had his 'pink period'. It shocked all the aunts of the time terribly, and scandalized his clergyman-father. It was revolt--it symbolized Youth--his most glamorous moments had been pink.
>
> Youth past, these redmen of the Oxford and Cambridge Colleges forgot all about it--real life began, dressing-up was at an end, the minarets of Moscow faded on the horizon.[108]

The people assembled in the Phipps' basement are merely putting on fashionable airs: speaking with upper-class accents, they voice the standard anti-capitalist sentiments, after which, inspired by the gloomy surroundings, they adopt poses of outworn concern for the social order. The press report of Percy's ordeal evokes reactions that are equally predictable. At O'Hara's party these same types are easily taken in by Percy, who clothes his adventure in the most romantic clichés of communist propaganda. As a technique of comic irony, emphasizing the superficiality of the entire scene, Lewis has Percy enveloped in objects of red: "A red patriarch, Percy Hardcaster reclined, propped by a plethora of red cushions, upon a wide reddish settee, in Red invalid magnificence. A red punkah should have been there to complete the picture. He was surrounded by men and women--by Red men and Red women."[109]

It is only in private, and when he is intimidated by Gillian's naivete, that Percy tells the truth about his experience in Spain and about his attitude toward politics. Citing Machiavelli's Prince as "one of the most truthful books ever written",[110] he gives Gillian a lecture on some of the practical truths about politics. Percy tells her that deceit is indispensible to the success of their movement, that she and her pseudo-intellectual friends are only tolerated as means to an end, and that his "adventure" in

Spain was only the result of a miscalculation on his part. It comes as an embarrassing shock for Gillian to face the awful reality that emerges from beneath the attractive exterior of her hero, and her impulse is to strike out at the offending object. When Gillian's husband receives the same lesson he also is nonplussed, but his reaction is to seek the potection of a disguise: "Tristy's face had taken on the bleak look which was his protective mask when confronted with a dilemma, or when first finding himself between its horns. As he found himself being tossed by Percy, he withdrew into his shell--if that figure of speech does not too violently conjure up a crustacean strayed into a corrida. Gradually he had come to understand that he, in his turn, and in his capacity of husband of Gillian, was being given a lesson in Communism, and not the sort he liked."[111] Percy realizes there is little to be gained in destroying the illusions about communism enjoyed by Gillian and Tristram. The political happiness of the Phipps and those of similar sensitivity consists ultimately in being well deceived. Most people, he concludes in speaking with Tristram, "don't like Communism when its naked, with the frills off."[112]

The O'Hara-Abershaw-Salmon faction represents still another segment of the political spectrum dramatized in The Revenge for Love. These men are the executive intelligences who remain behind the scene in any political context to take advantage of changing conditions without exposing themselves to danger. They are the most "unreal" of the novel's host of characters ("shadow-persons" in Margo's consciousness) because of their illusiveness. Their success is due in part to their ability to assume different roles without exposing the calculating detachment beneath the surface. The false panelling and floors that characterize the architecture of O'Hara's house are objective correlatives for the character of its owner and his colleagues. Sean O'Hara is an unscrupulous opportunist involved in a variety of contradictory occupations, who associates himself as much as possible with all political and social classes. He is striving to eliminate the evidence of Irish ancestry from his personality in favor of the accent and manners of a John Bull so that he may ingratiate himself with the upper-class Englishmen. Although he speaks out against the evils of capitalism, he is himself a prosperous entrepreneur. Abershaw brings with him echoes of the Bailiff as he springs up suddenly like a Jack-in-the-box at O'Hara's party and sits down "with a duck-like clucking" beside Margo. Indeed, he shares with the Bailiff a brazen attitude toward the obvious artificiality of his appearance, as the following description indicates:

> Margo saw the big slack muscles, of an indiarubber consistency, working about in the face of this highly bogus personage who had sat down beside them. His face was of a dark yellow tan, almost of the

> colour of mustard, and his hair of the same shade, only darker. He sported a small and what seemed a peculiarly postiche moustache. He smiled and then went back, with a sudden collapse of the countenance, to his watchful owlishness, in a manner that positively advertised its automatism, and shouted at you that it was unreal--boasting, as it were, that you could not hurt it, because it was all a guttapercha pretence. This more than life-size discursive tallowcatch, dropped down from the sky, was so poker-faced as to be the obvious answer to her metaphysical speculations, or rather sensations. For here was a mask of such transparent fauxbonhommie--a presence which displaced so many meaningless square inches of the ether, as to pose the whole problem of the real and its various mixtures and miscegenations with its opposite, right up to the negative pole of absolute imposture.[113]

Freddie Salmon is created in the same satiric mold, with a face that has "a really enormous false bottom." His "bogus jaw" suggests to the observer either that his clandestine occupations have been naturally manifested in the creation of such a mask, or that he has consciously adopted an expression of stupidity in order to deceive people. Whatever the case, his duplicity, like Abershaw's, is obvious to a perceptive observer. When Abershaw and Salmon appear at the forging factory they have been dining in the luxurious surroundings of their club, and they present anything but the picture of men dedicated to the cause of communism: "These two impressarios were dressed like twins in city suits that exactly matched, of braided black, with striped whipcord trousers--the black wings and the white wings of their neckties and collars discovering the spacious laundry, beneath the neckline, of an immaculate chest, which passed down out of sight--if not out of mind--behind the perfectly jiggered panels of the double-breasted waistcoats."[114] The clothing worn by Salmon and Abershaw exemplifies the blatant hypocrisy that Lewis recognized among the exploiters of fashionable politics. In The Diabolical Principle and the Dithyrambic Spectator Lewis refers to the absurd phenomenon of a communist in sumptuous attire: "A person in a well-cut twenty-guinea evening dress suit is, as a militant communist, nothing short of a logical monstrosity: the human reason shies at such a spectacle and a laugh bursts or should burst from your throat to greet that walking incongruity."[115]

Victor and Margo Stamp are the innocent dupes of political intrigue. Victor's totally unsophisticated nature makes him particularly vulnerable to deceit: hiding nothing himself, he fails even to suspect duplicity in others. Unlike the political adepts with whom he unfortunately comes in contact, Victor remains until his death, the simple "creature of nature." Perhaps the most complex as well as the most appealing of Lewis's feminine creations, Margo is, on one level, merely a romantic fool. Her juvenile infatuation with the romantic literature of the past as well as with the current Hollywood stars makes her appear to be simply a mindless puppet of popular fashions. Her love for Victor seems equally superficial because of its expression in romantic clichés. Even her voice has begun to take on a peculiar "hollow" sound, it is noted on a number of occasions. And yet beneath this excessively artificial exterior there exists a genuinely heroic nature. Despite her apparent naivete she is quick to detect the insincerity among those gathered at O'Hara's, and in Spain she uncovers the plot that threatens their safety while Victor remains oblivious to what is happening almost in front of his eyes. The honesty and strength of Margo's love outweighs its artifical clothing, and through her courageous attempt to rescue Victor, in spite of her natural inclination to play only a submissive role, she emerges the heroine.

It is easy to see Margo playing Desdemona to Victor's Othello: Victor is the unsuspecting physical giant from a foreign land whom she worships as a hero. Her frequent exclamations of veneration for the male principle ("Ah, these reckless Apollos!", "Oh, these handsome men!") recall Desdemona's similar expressions of bewildered infatuation ("O! these men, these men!"). The tragic demise of both couples is facilitated by the gullibility of the hero, and made poignant by the unflagging devotion of the heroine.

The Revenge for Love is a novel that explores the practical aspects of politics by showing the effects of political involvement on a personal level. Lewis always insists, in his expository works, on taking a pragmatic approach to the study of politics, and in The Revenge for Love, as in The Human Age, this point of view is maintained: "It is not a book of political edification," he recalls in Rude Assignment, "but one of political realism."[116] The Revenge for Love explores the world of politics as a playground of an absurd that thrives on the confusion of appearance and reality. Percy Hardcaster has learned that viability in a political context necessitates the clothing of reality in a variety of appealing disguises. One must, he perceives, evolve a shell for the playing of the political game that is composed of all the fashionable clichés and romantic notions that prevail in the public consciousness. By putting on the public in this way he advances his influence while protecting the delicacy of his own personality. It is those who remain ignorant about the realities of politics, the novel shows, who are the most vulnerable to exploitation. Part of "the art of being ruled" is to recognize the unpleasant truths about the administration of power that exist beneath the cloaks of politics.

CHAPTER SIX

THE CLERICAL SHIFT: TRAMP-CLOWN OR CROWD-MASTER

Forces of power in the "faith-state"

Lewis concedes, in "Rouault: Painter of Original Sin," that he has "no theology." In Time and Western Man, however, he examines in considerable depth questions relating to the existence of God and the nature of man's communication with the divine. There is a considerable body of theological literature, he points out, that exists in the context of the time-philosophy that is the general subject of his book. William James and those of his persuasion advocate a "direct" communication with the divine by abandoning rational discrimination in favor of intuition and an emotional suspension of disbelief. This type of approach to the worship of God, Lewis explains, is part of the currently popular levelling notions associated with the belief in "equality" and the "democratic principle." The "faith-state," as described by William James, involves, Lewis says, a reduction of the human state to the lowest level of matter. In this condition we become a "bar of iron," Lewis quotes James as saying, with a capacity for "magnetic feeling," and susceptible to arousal by any magnets exerting their influence in the neighborhood. Lewis seeks to refute the validity of James's image with the argument that man is not, and should not be, non-rational in his relationship with God. He should, on the contrary, exercise his uniquely human intellectual faculty, not only because it alone will enable him to arrive at a concept of the divine, but because it will also enable him to determine the authenticity of whatever "forces" are exerted on him: "We are not bars of iron, of course; and if we were we should probably resent very much the disturbance occasioned us by 'forces' prowling in our neighborhood, and should be as likely to assume them to be diabolic as the reverse."[1]

During the last decade of his career Lewis returned to an examination of the conditions influencing man's spiritual welfare. In "The Bishop's Fool" and The Red Priest his interest is focused on the viability of the Christian church in a civilization in transition. Two world-wars and vigorous political mobility, he says, in Rotting Hill, have created an ambiguous environment in which a variety of forces are competing for power. When people are in a condition of spiritual and political uncertainty there are opportunities for sham Messiahs to emerge in a variety of forms. Lewis says that he found himself reflecting again on the human masses as the material with which power worked, and on the manner in which the possessors of power conceal their intentions to control them.

Lewis had been aware for a long time that socialist movements were very closely related to the decline in the influence of the Christian church. Earlier in this study it was shown that in Left Wings over Europe Lewis recognized how in the thirties socialist leaders in particular were exploiting Christian sentiments that were no longer being cultivated by the churches. His view of the progress of socialism in the post-second-world-war decade continued to focus on this particular aspect of the subject. Rotting Hill and The Red Priest explore in considerable depth the relationship between Christianity and socialism. Both books show a culture in a state of disintegration, groping for new images, new clothing, to replace the old. However interested he was in questions of theology Lewis realized that in religion, as in politics, the personalities of the leaders are at least as important as the ideologies they are alleged to represent, and, further, that the truth about these leaders is frequently revealed by the manner in which they choose to make their appearance in the world. In Father Rymer and Augustine Card Lewis created figures who represent two directions in which the church might move through the leadership of its clerics.

Rotting Hill is a collection of short stories, debates, and character studies intended in part to reflect conditions produced by socialist politics in the post-war decade. In the "Foreward" Lewis explains that England has suffered the collapse of both the aristocracy and mercantile class, and the socialist governments that have replaced these formerly powerful classes have been clearly ineffective. Underneath the misleading facade of social progress and potential prosperity, he argues, there is gross inefficiency and stagnation. On the simplest practical levels the products of the new management are seen to be inferior. In "Time the Tiger," for example, shirts are ill-fitting, scissors loose and dull, shoe-laces too short, jackets tastelessly coloured, bread stale, and so on. More alarming, however, than the defects in mass-produced goods, is the realization that people are passively consenting to mechanistic regimentation on a grand scale for the sake of the socialist cause. They are becoming the puppets of the new leaders who "seem to regard it as part of their sacred mission to create an assembly-line world and to reproduce the atmosphere of the factory in every part of human life, from the dentist's chair to the marriage bed."[2] The fungus or "rot" that is slowly destroying some of the buildings in Lewis's area is seen as a symbolic reflection of the decay infecting the fabric of the nation as a whole.

A "sartorial plight": "The Bishop's Fool"

If Rotting Hill is a "political book" it is so, Lewis explains, because the subject of politics is unavoidable: "If my characters are obsessed by politics, it is because today our lives are saturated with them."[3] Socialism, he argues once again, is the natural consequence of the failure of the Christian churches. The Christian religion has paved the way for the introduction of socialism, he says, by having instilled in people a firm belief in the ultimate morality of social and material equality. People are not generally inclined to share their possessions with others, Lewis says, but "a long process of religious conditioning (latterly operating through such words as 'decency', 'fair play', etc. etc.) has led us to a point at which we empower the State to deprive us of practically everything. This is the work of Jesus."[4] Lewis's investigations in Rotting Hill and his dramatizations of various attitudes are, then, focused on the general deterioration in the fabric of society, with particular emphasis on the effects of socialism and its relationship with Christianity. His specimens include several members of the clergy, but of these Father Rymer is the outstanding example.

"The Bishop's Fool" is a character study of a fascinating clergyman whose "sartorial plight," as Lewis refers to it later in "Parents and Horses," provides the central problem around which the piece is focused. Lewis's initial interest in the man, however, was consistent with the general focus of the book: "I knew that in its 'dry' form the Rot was in the wood roof of the churches, in reredos, in pulpit, and in pew. It was my idea that this might be a good opportunity to learn whether the Rot has entered into the Cloth."[5]

The procedure by which Rymer's personality is finally discovered begins, in the typical Lewisian style, with an analysis of what is visible to the eye. At their first formal meeting Lewis observes that his guest has the "clerical crouch" and the "prayerful angle of the suppliant eyes" that are consistent with his profession. It is his clothing, however, that causes the major difficulty in determining the nature of his role. When Rymer appears at Lewis's door, he is noticeably shabby. Lewis quickly relates this shabbiness to the shabby-genteel style, popular among young gentlemen at Oxford, and long assumed as an eccentric manifestation of superiority in English society. There is in addition, however, the disturbing absence of a clerical collar for which Lewis is quick to seek an explanation: "'Where is your collar?' I demanded. Minus his master's name upon a brass-plate, collarless and unidentifiable, this big dog was at large in London."[6] In chapter four of this study it was pointed out that one of the fundamental tenets of Lewis's political philosophy was that politicians, as men in possession of great power, ought to be readily identifiable. It is consistent, therefore, that Lewis should have a similar attitude toward representatives of the church. Some satisfaction is provided when Rymer extracts from his pocket a collar that looks "authentic," and the matter of the shabbiness is put aside for the time being as Lewis and his guest converse.

During the account of the first episode in his acquaintance with Rymer Lewis offers the reader a number of alternative conclusions about the nature of the personality in question: Rymer might be judged, he suggests, "a Christian pest, a dangerous busybody, or a saint in motley."[7] Lewis admits that his own initial impression was unfair to Rymer, adding that he is in the habit of seeing things at first from a relatively detached point of view: "I am the possessor of a tough eye. It does not soften what it sees: it hands me everything like a photographer's untouched photograph."[8]

The final step in the analysis of Rymer takes place when Lewis observes the cleric in his own environment, the rural parish of Bagwick. This time Lewis is amused to find Rymer even more threadbare than he had appeared in London. He actually resembles a tramp-clown, his attire clearly calculated, it seems, to elicit sympathy from all observers: "No mendicant friar ever hobbled down a street in a more tatterdemalian advertisement of poverty,"[9] Lewis reflects while taking in the details of his outfit:

> A brownish tweed that was so obsolete that it necessitated a vertical patch the size of a folded newspaper in one place, the sleeves of which had to terminate in cuffs of leather three inches deep, and demanded to be reinforced with leather at the collar line and to have two pocket-tops bound with pigskin, was already qualified to serve the tramp-comedian in his act. Parti-coloured patches practically everywhere had plainly been selected for their effect. Only that could explain the mighty patch placarding his left side: for did it have to be _black_? It was a piece of 'the Cloth' called into service--perhaps cut off what was left of the trousers he wore as a curate. Oh, Rymer--_cabotin_!--almighty clown! That was my _first_ reaction to the Rector chez lui.[10]

Lewis comes to realize, however, that he has been mistaken in his reading of Rymer's clothing. A new suit is actually beyond Rymer's means, but his Oxford training, Lewis asserts, would "lead him to make a great big comic virtue of necessity."[11] Lewis then considers what he would in fact wear, given a choice. His faith in communist principles might suggest the overalls of the labourer, but his superiors would have disapproved. The "brushed-up-till-it-shone shabby-genteel" style, on the other hand, would violate his sincerity. What he does, therefore, is "satirize his poverty," as Lewis puts it, rather than conceal it.

Rymer is an outcast in his community for several reasons. The church itself, as Lewis points out repeatedly, has long since lost most of its influence along with its affluence. And many areas, like Bagwick, are now under the domination of the new-rich farmers who look with disdain upon the clergy for their former close association with the aristocracy, as well as for their present poverty. The ill-feeling toward Rymer is compounded, of course, by the fact that he flaunts his poverty before them:

> Dressed in garments literally dropping to pieces he moves around his parish, among people who dread and loathe poverty and want. And he stands in spite of himself for poverty and for want. He is one of the first English clergymen to stand for poverty and want. And as he moves around, from house to house, the doors quickly shut at his approach as if he were infected with some complaint which no one was particularly anxious to have; and

> out of rags tacked together his 'Oxford accent' issues with incongruous patronage; his encyclopaedic affectations exasperate, his great-heartedness abashes--for there is no cash only credit in Heaven, the currency of religion, no longer legal tender.[12]

The role played by Rymer has developed in the following way: finding himself clothed in the rags of poverty, he has chosen to utilize this image as a manifestation of the true concept of the humble servant of Christ. He is not above indulging in some exaggeration in the dramatization of his role, but Lewis seems convinced that Rymer possesses genuine qualities of heroism that complement his proclivity for the dramatic: "If need be," he says, "he would sit naked at the foot of the Cross (though it might be with the superior glint of the Have-not in his glazing eye) and die if he was not fed."[13]

Lewis sees in Rymer's "sartorial plight" the sign of a shift in the role of the cleric. Although Lewis is apprehensive about the faith in a Christian ethic being transferred from the religious sphere to the political (where it is in danger of being corrupted or finally abandoned altogether), he does see some merit in the "flight from the cloth." The image of the cleric in rags, notwithstanding the unfair hardships visited upon the particular individual, is certainly more encouraging than the image of the cleric clothed in worldly riches. Rymer is seen, then, as a vision of the future: "Soon all the clergymen in this country will have vows of poverty thrust upon them . . . and a new type of ministry will come into being. Quite probably it is the only way to secure a truly Christian church. It may after all be God's will. In his great wisdom it would not be likely to escape Him that a pennyless clergyman is better than one who rides to hounds."[14] Rymer is not the sole example of this trend in Rotting Hill. Reverend Mathew Laming, in "Parents and Horses," has tattered clothing that reveals his severely limited funds. But, Lewis reflects, "better, this, than the well-heeled patronising cleric of the past, who treated his villagers as if they were villeins and he a medieval abbot."[15]

In Rotting Hill Lewis suggests that Christianity's only hope for survival is to distinguish itself by stripping away the trappings that associate it with wealth and temporal power. It is "difficult to see," he says, "how Christianity can live, if only for a moment, except by some heroic measure. One that recommends itself to me, is that all the churches, vicarages, bishops' palaces, etc., be closed."[16] A shift in this direction is evident in the relatively isolated and clownish figure of Rymer. This rural cleric's virtual nakedness, albeit the result of necessity, is a far more encouraging vision than the gorgeously attired figure of the "red priest."

The magnetism of the biretta: The Red Priest

Written several years after Rotting Hill, near the end of Lewis's life, The Red Priest presents a very different shift in the role of the cleric from that dramatized in "The Bishop's Fool." Like Rymer, Father Card is a student of socialism and its relationship with Christianity, but, unlike Rymer, he is seeking to exploit this knowledge for his own purposes. Card, in fact, emerges as a "monstre gai," resembling the Bailiff more than he does any other cleric in Lewis's fiction. This likeness becomes more and more evident as the narrative proceeds along familiar Lewisian lines: the central figure is at first assessed through eyes that are considerably removed from any intimate knowledge of the man, and it is only later that the true essence of his character is discovered beneath the mask that he assumes for the public.

Father Card, in the short time he has been rector at St. Catherine's, has become a public personality. His "red priest" tag is the result of shocking sermons exploring the correspondence between Christianity and communism as well as of his associations with Russian dignitaries. Further notoriety has come from his efforts to make the services radically Anglo-Catholic in form. The most recent source of scandal has been the removal of a prominent parishioner from the church during the service. Press reports and local gossip have uncovered various bits of information that add color to his reputation: a descendant of the aristocracy, he attended Eton, where he distinguished himself as a boxing champion and audacious prankster; he later graduated from Oxford, at which time he declared himself to be an Anglo-Catholic. Card has thus become a minor celebrity on the basis of his activities in several areas of interest.

Card's physical presence contributes to the fascination already generated by his reputation. He has a huge muscular body and a superior bearing that is complemented by the prestigious accent of the ruling class. He always appears in a cassock and biretta, the latter supported, it seems, by a constantly furrowed brow that is the characteristic feature of his appearance:

> It in no way diminished the attractiveness of the massive face of Augustine Card that his forehead has been blessed with a superfluity of skin. The head remained furrowed like a large dog's, the soft folds converging in frowning lines at the centre. The expression of his face was consequently one of unremitting inquiry--a look of juvenile puzzlement was what it seemed to the eye of those favouring the augustian personality. For instance, as he invaded the Mews, seeming to thrust up his biretta like the footballer butting at the ball, he had certainly seemed adorably puzzled (wondering and questioning like some innocent child) to the bewitched Jane Greevey.[17]

The corrugated brow and biretta are not merely a caricaturish technique of description, but a visual metaphor that provides a clue to Card's personality.[18]

Card's striking appearance, coupled with all the information that is generally known about him, produces divergent opinions about his personality from the characters in the novel.

Jane Greevey is thoroughly infatuated by the romance of Card's connections with Rome and Moscow, as well as by his commanding presence. Mary Chillingham, who later becomes his wife, is captivated in the same way early in the novel. Matilda Tidings, on the other hand, is suspicious about Card's sincerity. He is, she says, "a fellow who has an appetite for the limelight."[19] His apparent interest in communism, she believes, is merely an attempt to draw attention to himself: "I do not think his 'redness' goes very far. He is a self-advertising man, and redness is one of the obvious ways of getting advertisement--especially for a parson."[20] A similar view is held by Jane Greevey's tenant, Hugh Bestens-Corbett, who describes Card as a "poseur" and a "clown": "In a country parish," he asserts,"he would probably get himself thrown into a duck pond or tarred and feathered."[21] The movement of Card's head reminds Hughie of "a footballer butting at a ball" or of someone in the act of balancing an uncomfortable object on his head. His upturned eyes and wrinkled brow, Hughie says, are merely an attempt to keep his biretta from falling off.

After the first few chapters of the novel have given the public view of him, the narrator moves in abruptly on Card as he is discovered in the privacy of his "cell." Clad in a silk dressing-gown and reclining on a luxuriously upholstered chaise-longue, he is far from reflecting the conventional image of a clergyman. He is, furthermore, engaged in an eager search for news of himself among a stack of newspapers at his side. As the conversation with his curate proceeds, it quickly becomes apparent that Card has, as Matilda Tidings speculated, a greed for publicity. Later, in a privately circulated article by Dr. Hartnell, it is revealed that Card has, for a long time, been possessed by a pathological desire for attention: "My friend regards anything written about him as publicity. He has a passion for publicity. He belongs to that class of man who could kill his grandmother, and willingly go to the gallows, gloating over the columns and photographs in the press, immediately preceding his necessary extinction."[22] The function of his curate, Horridge, seems to be largely that of a press secretary. As he and Card celebrate the ensuing publication of still another article about the infamous "red priest," Card refers to his own earlier career in "Publicity," but this is one part of his past that he prefers to have concealed. His experience in this area is evident, however, as he indicates that the photographs required for the article should be taken, not in his chaise-longue, but in the empty room at the back, showing him in the performance of his office.[23]

Augustine Card resembles in character a number of Lewis's creations who manufacture exteriors calculated to fascinate the public. Like Percy Hardcaster, for example, Card has acquired a public mask that is discarded only among privileged company. Card is also an accomplished actor who is able to change suddenly from one mask to another, a talent epitomized in the figure of the Bailiff. His capacity for an almost magical duplicity is exhibited on the occasion of Mary Chillingham's visit:

> This was rather like a dream. She was instantly aware that the man she was now in front of had completely changed from what he had been before. It was as if in public he wore one face, and now he was alone--alone with her. They were alone.
>
> This was very extraordinary. The only mask by which most people knew this unusual man had been dispensed with; and all the time she was there he remained as he must have appeared to intimates. For it was perfectly clear that the face she had always seen in public was one manufactured for his public life, one very rarely laid aside. By this time it was second nature, for it was rigidly adhered to; and, with a public face, went a public nature. Similarly, when he laid aside his official face, there was--quite intact--a private nature, which then, quite visibly, as it were, he summoned from some interior. And he did not trouble to conceal his relief at finding himself able to be his 'private' self. Whereas publicly he 'sleep-walked', as it had been remarked, when he was without his usual disguise, he seemed to come to life. Mary was amazed at the alteration. It was as if he had lifted a mask off his face.[24]

Mary's thoughts about Card after her visit continue to operate in the realm of the miraculous: she feels herself to have been in the company of an "alarming magician" who had "transformed himself" into another being. The shock is like that experienced by Gillian Phipps when she is witness for the first time to Percy Hardcaster's private self. Card's explanation to Mary for the sudden exposure of himself is that it is only on the rare occasions when he encounters an intelligent person that he is inclined to remove his public mask. The Bailiff makes the same statement to Hyperides when, for a moment, he ceases to play his public roles in order to converse privately with his rival.

Card has learned the value of covering his own personality with a shell that is attractive to the public. Although he is, as he puts it, a "professional of religion," his primary interest is not in theology or faith, but in what might be called the politics of religion; that is, the means by which power may be secured in the sphere of religion. In Card's particular case this means the securing of power for himself. Speaking very candidly again--this time in private conference with his curate--he reveals his very carefully considered estimate of the future course of events and his own ambition to profit by it:

> Horrid, I have seen the fangs of the Welfare State, I have smelt its breath. I know that Craigliven Castle will in a few years be a national monument--at present it is a seaside boarding house presided over by a one-time gamekeeper--I know that absolute taxation will soon have abolished everything above the level of the charlady or the railway porter. England is not on the way to being a second Sweden, with the beautiful houses of working men, whose rooms glow with the inside of forest trees--not that, but a sort of Methodist's model of Russia. Well, Horrid, I know where power is, and power is where I must be. It is no longer a matter of waving a red flag with a schoolboy fierceness, but the necessity of getting as near as possible to a vodka-tippling diplomat--near enough to the Black Throne to get a little straight news from the other side of Nowhere.[25]

In Card's view the birth of communism in the twentieth century is comparable to the birth of Christianity in the time of Christ. In a speech delivered to the students of Hambledon College he explains that both Christianity and communism have given hope to the masses of underprivileged people by systems that offer the security of paternal guidance. You are as close to the source of the "new creed," he tells the students, as people in the first or second centuries were to the source of Christianity.

The success of major political and religious movements, Card believes, is largely the result of the popularity of their leaders. What enabled a man of Christ's insignificant social status to become a leader of such magnitude, he speculates, was his own personal magnetism: "Jesus himself must have been a mesmerist, or like a magnet to the human spirit, which was attracted to it, and adhered to it in mesmeric embrace."[26] Given the existence of great numbers of people in the twentieth century who long for salvation from their miseries and are receptive to a new doctrine similar to that which stirred people in the period following the birth of Christianity, Card recognizes the great opportunities for those seeking to gain the power of leadership. It is clearly his intention to take advantage of the situation himself through his own capacity to lead and the usual willingness of the people to follow.

Like most crowd-masters in Lewis's fiction, Card has little respect for the intelligence of the ruled. He treats the letters from individual parishioners with scorn, instructing Horridge to "waste" a stamp in replying to one or two of them. Detailed preparations are undertaken, not to intensify the spiritual quality of the service, but to make the parishioners more submissive. When the effect of the pageantry is threatened on one occasion by the absence of his curate, Card, once again showing his contempt for the stupidity of the people, suggests they dress William, the policeman, in the appropriate robes. Horridge proposes instead that they rent a real clergyman after he reflects that Card might bring in anyone from the street to "play the part," and Card concedes reluctantly: "Augustine was silent. He obviously relished the idea of dressing up a street-hawker, disguising him in a tunicle and dalmatic, placing him in the required position, in front of the high altar and trusting to the dumbness of the congregation not to notice the odd behavior of this clumsy fellow."[27]

The services that are conducted by Card and his associates show clearly the same techniques of crowd-mastery that are evident in the Bailiff's performance in Childermass. When Jane Greevey and her friend attend mass out of curiosity they are ushered to seats that have been carefully arranged according to the vicar's wishes. The actual ceremony is preceded by an impressive procession described in phrases replete with irony that suggest Jane's fascination with what is merely superficial. The "so obviously very devout" figure of

Card emerges from the vestry with his lips moving "as if in prayer."[28] He is preceded by two altar-boys with censers, a beautifully dressed choir, and two "gorgeously clothed" curates. Jane is increasingly captivated as the high mass proceeds, and she fixes her attention on Card's intensely suggestive forehead turned upward in prayer: "This strongly furrowed brow was what Jane had first noticed in dear, dear Augustine--disdainful and questioning now; before, sorrowfully submissive."[29] Card finally mounts the pulpit as the Bailiff, his box, and begins a speech calculated to win sympathetic support from his audience. Referring to the expulsion of the prominent parishioner from the last service, for which he gained a great deal of very welcome publicity, Card says how deeply grieved he is that such a thing occurred. He did his best to avoid resorting to violence, he says, but the man had continued his obstinacy despite Card's many previous attempts to convince him of his error. Finally, he pleads, he was forced into a predicament in which he could only assert his responsibility to his office. The apology ends with his leaning forward and speaking in a voice filled with emotion: "Let me say with the sincerest humility that if I did not feel myself entrusted with a mission I would give way to the prejudicces of this well-meaning member of my congregation."[30] All this is strikingly similar to the Bailiff's apologies to the petitioners after the interruption of Hyperides or after the murder of Barney has taken place before their eyes. Jane Greevey recognizes that the force of the speech is dependent entirely on the manner in which Card has clothed whatever he is saying with the "dynamism of his personality." And yet she is quite happy to succumb: "She would follow this teacher wherever he wished. But how many Jane Greeveys there were in the body of men and women behind and around her she could not guess. It seemed to her like a magnetism emanating from a Pied Piper, which commands you to follow. A door opens in the mountain, and you go in. Jane hoped it would be a great magnetism felt by everybody, and, all together, they would enter that door, singing some hymn she did not know."[31]

Subsequent services show Card eager to increase his power over the congregation and to generate more publicity about himself beyond the confines of the parish. Services become increasingly calculated to manipulate the emotions of the people. It is revealing that Card actually abandons the terminology of the church in favor of theatrical phrases when he gives directions to his assistants, referring to various "parts" or "roles" to be played in the "staging" of a particular "performance." Pursuant to his alleged belief that communism and Christianity rest on the same bases, he invites three Russian priests to participate in a mass.

His purpose, however, is clearly to increase the exotic flavor of the service with the presence of the visitors from the east as well as to stimulate the emotions of the congregation with respect to such ideals as universal brotherhood and the communion of the faithful. Mary Chillingham is on this occasion directed to stand up during the service and announce her unquestioning allegiance to Father Card. Following her lead other participants planted in the audience will give similar testimonials in an attempt to stimulate an emotional wave throughout the crowd. The service proceeds as planned, the romantic music of the Russian liturgy complementing the fantastic appearance of the foreign visitors. A sizeable proportion of those in attendance are scandalized at the demonstration led by Mary, but on the whole Card is satisfied, and the expected publicity is forthcoming.

The rest of Card's short career at St. Catherine's is characterized by an almost frantic attempt to attract attention to himself and gain followers. Card revels in the publicity he attracts, as both at the time of his marriage to Mary and at the birth of their first son he casts himself in the leading role. Both his career and his life, however, are soon consumed by the violence that Hartnell insisted was dominant in his nature.

The Red Priest constitutes a warning to the ruled about what may lie beneath the clothing of the new rulers. Card seeks to disguise his lust for power under the conventional robes of authority and to transform the cleric's role into one that also reflects the pseudo-religious power-structures of the future. The shocking discrepancy between his public and private faces, shown only to privileged confidants, is a clear indication of his duplicity. A more subtle clue to the falsity of his position is evident from the beginning, however, in the always conspicuous wrinkled brow and precariously balanced biretta that together operate as a constant reminder that the traditional role of the cleric, symbolized by the biretta, is at odds with the personality beneath.

The Red Priest and "The Bishop's Fool" dramatize two ways in which the church, through its clerics, might move in a period of confusion and change. In Rotting Hill Lewis expresses the fears he had for the viability of the Christian church and, more important, the principles on which it is based: "Two world-wars in rapid succession have hurried the end of Christianity in England. Socialism, as time passes, melting into communism, will take religion's place in the form of a brotherly millennium--a heaven on earth for good socialist boys and girls, and a hell-on-earth for the wicked (vide slave-camps, salt-mines, etc.). In place of Christ there will be men-gods like Stalin or Hitler, a High God being dispensed with."[32] In Augustine Card Lewis created a man who visualizes, as he himself did, the gravitation of power away from the church toward socialist organizations and, ultimately, into the hands of their leaders. Card recognizes the opportunities for power-addicts like himself to become one of the new crowd-masters. His friend Hartnell asserts on one occasion that Card is "a person who is so magnetic as to supply all the people with whom he comes in contact with a galvanic shock."[33] The vocabulary used frequently in the novel to describe the "dynamism" or "magnetism" of Card's personality that enables him to attract the masses in the vicinity of his influence recalls the Jamesion analogy, examined by Lewis in Time and Western Man. In The Red Priest Lewis dramatizes the process by which the spiritual vitality of the Christian community could be reduced to the same levels of mechanical responses that are cultivated in the area of politics. That Lewis had been aware for a long time of the dangers to the masses from crowd-masters emerging from the current spiritual limbo under the guise of saviors is evident in a warning issued twenty years earlier in Left Wings over Europe:

> Having, eighty per cent of us, most imprudently abandoned our religion, are we going to succumb to sham Messiahs, in whatever guise they come, one after the other? Are we destined to be the victims of this spiritual vacuum--which of all vacuums Nature most 'abhors'? Must we, in consequence, be at the mercy of any shrewd and plausible crook who makes a noise like a 'savior'?--or who takes it into his head to trap us (after the manner of the communist) by way of those automatic responses of ours--by playing upon the latent christianity which as ex-christians we still secrete, in large quantities; albeit unknown to ourselves? Is that the vengeance that waits upon our apostacy![34]

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER ONE

[1] Lewis, *Blasting and Bombardiering*, 43.

[2] Lewis, *Wyndham Lewis The Artist. From 'Blast' to Burlington House*, 77.

[3] Lewis, *The Caliph's Design*, 35.

[4] Lewis, *Blast #1*, 136.

[5] Lewis, *Blast #2*, 39.

[6] Lewis, *Rude Assignment*, 117.

[7] ibid., 118.

[8] Rose,ed., *The Letters Of Wyndham Lewis*, 65.

[9] Lewis, *Blasting and Bombardiering*, 9.

[10] Lewis, *Time and Western Man*, 7.

[11] ibid., 8.

[12] Lewis, *The Art of Being Ruled*, 403.

[13] Lewis, *Satire and Fiction*, 49.

[14] Santayana, *Soliloquies in England and Later Soliloquies*, 131-32.

[15] Lewis, *Satire and Fiction*, 49.

[16] Lewis, "Studies in the Art of Laughter", 511.

[17] Lewis, *The Caliph's Design*, 16.

[18] Lewis, *Wyndham Lewis the Artist. From 'Blast' to Burlington House*, 188.

[19] Lewis, *The Caliph's Design*, 15.

[20] ibid., 25.

[21] The intimate relationship between man's personality and the environment he has manufactured has in recent years received considerable attention. Edward T. Hall, for example,

discusses this aspect of man's existence: "Man and his extensions constitute one interrelated system. It is a mistake of the greatest magnitude to act as though man were one thing and his house or his cities, his technology or his language were something else. . . . The relationship of man to his extensions is simply a continuation and a specialized form of the relationship of organisms in general to their environment" (Hall, The Hidden Dimension, 117). Marshall McLuhan, in his Understanding Media, explains that the materials with which man surrounds himself are merely extensions of his own skin: "If clothing is an extension of our private skins to store and channel our own heat and energy, housing is a collective means of achieving the same end for the family or the group. Housing as shelter is an extension of our own bodily heat-control mechanisms--a collective skin or garment. Cities are an even further extension of bodily organs to accomodate the needs of large groups" (McLuhan, Understanding Media, 123).

[22] I am utilizing I. A. Richards' explanation of metaphor and the "context theorem of meaning" outlined in The Philosophy of Rhetoric.

CHAPTER TWO

[1] Lewis, Time and Western Man, 365.

[2] ibid., 97.

[3] ibid., 97.

[4] ibid., 98.

[5] ibid., 316.

[6] Lewis, The Art of Being Ruled, 163.

[7] ibid., 229.

[8] ibid., 229.

[9] Lewis, "The Dress-Body-Mind Aggregate", 191.

[10] ibid., 191.

[11] ibid., 191.

[12] Kenner, "The Visual World of Wyndham Lewis", 32.

[13] ibid., 36-37.

[14] ibid., 36.

[15] ibid., 36.

[16] ibid., 32-34.

[17] Lewis, The Wild Body, 237-38.

[18] ibid., 238.

[19] ibid., 239.

[20] ibid., 241.

[21] ibid., 238.

[22] ibid., 241.

[23] Santayana, Soliloquies in England and Later Soliloquies, 133.

[24] ibid., 128.

[25] Lewis, The Wild Body, 6.

[26] ibid., 5.

[27] ibid., 113.

[28] ibid., 119.

[29] ibid., 15

[30] ibid., 15-16.

[31] ibid., 19.

[32] ibid., 19.

[33] ibid., 19.

[34] ibid., 25.

[35] ibid., 24-25.

[36] ibid., 30.

[37] ibid., 40-41.

[38] ibid., 53-54.

[39] ibid., 62-63.

[40] ibid., 70-71.

[41] ibid., 103.

[42] ibid., 103.

[43] ibid., 105.

[44] ibid., 104-05.

[45] ibid., 107.

[46] ibid., 127-28.

[47] ibid., 128.

[48] ibid., 185.

[49] ibid., 186.

[50] ibid., 186.

[51] ibid., 188.

[52] ibid., 189.

[53] Lewis, Rude Assignment, 113.

CHAPTER THREE

[1] Erasmus, The Praise of Folly, 44.

[2] Weisinger, The Agony and the Triumph, 67.

[3] Park, Race and Culture, 249.

[4] Santayana, Soliloquies in London and Later Soliloquies, 134.

[5] ibid., 135.

[6] Lewis, The Apes of God, 491.

[7] Lewis, The Mysterious Mr. Bull, 280.

[8] ibid., 271.

[9] ibid. 124.

[10] ibid. 280.

[11] Lewis, _The Vulgar Streak_, 29.

[12] ibid., 33-34.

[13] ibid., 29.

[14] ibid., 13.

[15] ibid., 13.

[16] ibid., 37.

[17] ibid., 30.

[18] ibid., 180.

[19] Lewis, _The Wild Body_, 235.

[20] Lewis, "Doppelgänger", 23.

[21] ibid., 24.

[22] ibid., 24.

[23] ibid., 25.

[24] ibid., 33.

[25] Lewis, _Rotting Hill_, 113.

[26] ibid., 154.

[27] ibid., 112.

[28] ibid., 121.

[29] ibid., 118-19.

[30] Lewis, _Tarr_, 31.

[31] Lewis, _Rotting Hill_, 134-35.

[32] Lewis, _Snooty Baronet_, 16.

[33] ibid., 19.

[34] ibid., 32.

[35] ibid., 151-52.

[36] ibid., 13.

[37] ibid., 11.

[38] ibid., 36.

[39] ibid., 37-38.

[40] ibid., 264.

CHAPTER FOUR

[1] Lewis, The Wild Body, 232-33.

[2] Lewis, Tarr, 1. All references to Tarr are from the "revised edition" published by Chatto and Windus in 1928. The first edition (The Egoist, 1918) does, indeed, have a relatively undisciplined liveliness that is occasionally lost in the later edition, as Hugh Kenner argues in his Wyndham Lewis. I have used the "revised edition," however, simply because it is more readily accessible, and because the variations between the two texts in the passages I quote are of no significance to my argument.

[3] ibid., 1.

[4] Lewis, The Caliph's Design, 35.

[5] Lewis, Tarr, 2.

[6] ibid., 3.

[7] ibid., 4.

[8] ibid., 4.

[9] Lewis, The Diabolical Principle and the Dithyrambic Spectator, 131.

[10] Lewis, Tarr, 16-17.

[11] ibid., 15-16.

[12] ibid., 17.

[13] Variations of Hobson's type appear occasionally throughout Lewis's fiction. Martin Penny-Smythe of The Vulgar Streak is a figure of similar cultured affectation. Harry Whitaker of America, I Presume is another: "He is still very much Oxford, is Whitaker, with his soiled flannel bags, knock-about tweed-jacket, no hat, and a rather lofty blue eye. He holds his head high, and stares meditatively in your face. He scans the world about him with an arrogant competence. Whether the slothfulness of his gait and expression is a hangover of the leisure of the Oxford colleges, or just the laziness of the American I cannot decide" (America, I Presume, 63).

[14] Lewis, Tarr, 17.

[15] ibid., 21.

[16] ibid., 21.

[17] ibid., 196.

[18] ibid., 196-97.

[19] ibid., 196.

[20] Lewis, "Unlucky for Pringle", 404.

[21] Lewis, Tarr, 3.

[22] ibid., 6.

[23] ibid., 52.

[24] The potato was valued for some time in Europe as an aphrodisiac food, and the strawberry, associated with Venus, is an emblem of love as well as a remedy for melancholy (Funk and Wagnalls Standard Dictionary of Folklore Mythology and Legend).

[25] Lewis, Tarr, 38.

[26] ibid., 40-41.

[27] ibid., 43.

[28] ibid., 65.

[29] ibid., 39.

[30] ibid., 49-50.

[31] ibid., 40.

[32] ibid. 203.

33 ibid., 56.

34 ibid., 56.

35 ibid., 47-48.

36 ibid., 58.

37 ibid., 59.

38 Lewis, The Wild Body, 236-37.

39 Lewis, Tarr, 47.

40 ibid., 203.

41 ibid., 304.

42 ibid., 91.

43 ibid., 125-26.

44 ibid., 126.

45 Lewis, The Wild Body, 246-47.

46 Lewis, Tarr, 294.

47 ibid., 296.

48 ibid., 296.

49 ibid., 297.

50 ibid., 301.

51 ibid., 302.

52 ibid., 302.

53 ibid., 303.

54 ibid., 96.

55 ibid., 145.

56 ibid., 68.

57 ibid., 68-69.

58 ibid., 89.

59 ibid., 67.

60 ibid., 71.

61 ibid., 104-05.

62 ibid., 118.

63 ibid., 119.

64 Lewis, Rude Assignment, 106-07.

65 Lewis, Tarr, 82.

66 ibid., 123.

67 ibid., 123-24.

68 ibid., 119.

69 ibid., 147.

70 ibid., 119-20.

71 ibid., 121.

72 ibid., 124-25.

73 ibid., 153.

74 ibid., 262.

75 ibid., 244.

76 ibid., 252.

77 ibid., 262.

78 ibid., 282.

79 ibid., 285.

80 Eliot, "Tarr", 105-06.

81 Wagner, Wyndham Lewis, 242.

82 Dostoevsky, "Notes from Underground", 209.

83 ibid., 164.

84 ibid., 165.

85 Lewis, Rude Assignment, 148.

86 ibid., 113.

87 Rose, ed., The Letters of Wyndham Lewis, 33.

88 Wees, Vorticism and the English Avant-Garde, 143.

89 Rose, ed., The Letters of Wyndham Lewis, 2.

90 Wees, Vorticism and the English Avant-Garde, 146-47.

91 Lewis, Blast #1, [8].

92 Lewis, Rude Assignment, 52.

93 Rose, ed., The Letters of Wyndham Lewis, 191.

94 Lewis, The Mysterious Mr. Bull, 132.

95 Lewis, The Apes of God, 49.

96 ibid., 49.

97 ibid., 129-30.

98 ibid., 131.

99 ibid., 131-32.

100 Rose, ed., The Letters of Wyndham Lewis, 167.

101 Lewis, The Apes of God, 14. The entire prologue, "Death the Drummer," appears in italics in the Penguin edition of The Apes of God.

102 ibid., 18.

103 ibid., 28.

104 ibid., 30.

105 ibid., 367.

106 ibid., 454.

107 ibid., 366.

108 ibid., 509-10.

109 ibid., 643.

[110] W. K. Rose, in *The Letters of Wyndham Lewis*, alludes to Lewis's antipathy for members of this group: "His angry rupture with Roger Fry confirmed in him a lifelong opposition to the Bloomsbury group and what it signified for him: art as the province of the socially and financially established, dilettantism, the effete versus the vital" (Rose, ed., *The Letters of Wyndham Lewis*, 42).

[111] Lewis, *The Apes of God*, 66-67.

[112] ibid., 65.

[113] ibid., 82. Recent studies of Bloomsbury (among them Quenten Bell's *Bloomsbury*, J. K. Johnstone's *The Bloomsbury Group*, and Michael Holroyd's *Lytton Strachey*) refer to a number of personal affectations possessed by some members of the group, such as an eccentric manner of speech, an affected shyness, and an extraordinary style of dress.

[114] ibid., 66-67.

[115] ibid., 80.

[116] ibid., 33.

[117] ibid., 35.

[118] ibid., 41.

[119] ibid., 261.

[120] ibid., 264.

[121] ibid., 115.

[122] ibid., 368-69.

[123] ibd., 371.

[124] Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, 450-51.

[125] Lewis, *The Apes of God*, 353.

[126] ibid., 362. J. G. Frazer describes the belief among certain people in the magic sympathy between a person and his clothes, so that harm may be done to a person in his absence. There exists the belief as well that injury may be inflicted by abusing even the footprints of an intended victim (Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, 50).

127 ibid., 300.

128 ibid., 583-84.

129 ibid., 590.

130 ibid., 586.

131 ibid., 631.

132 Kenner, Wyndham Lewis, 101-02.

133 Lewis, The Apes of God, 531.

CHAPTER FIVE

1 Lewis, Blasting and Bombardiering, 185.

2 ibid., 185.

3 ibid., 205.

4 Lewis, The Writer and the Absolute, 104.

5 Lewis, Rude Assignment, 59.

6 ibid., 166.

7 ibid., 166.

8 ibid., 62-63.

9 ibid., 60.

10 ibid., 160.

11 ibid., 160.

12 Lewis, The Lion and the Fox, 76.

13 ibid., 81.

14 ibid., 84-85.

15 ibid., 85.

16 ibid., 85.

17 ibid., 87.

18 ibid., 104-05.

[19] Lewis, Rude Assignment, 70.

[20] Lewis, The Art of Being Ruled, 287.

[21] ibid., 419.

[22] Lewis, The Doom of Youth, 196-97.

[23] ibid., 106.

[24] ibid., 12-13.

[25] Lewis, The Art of Being Ruled, 41.

[26] Lewis, Left Wings over Europe, 265.

[27] Lewis, Rude Assignment, 142.

[28] Lewis, The Lion and the Fox, 137.

[29] Lewis, Blasting and Bombardiering, 89.

[30] Lewis, "Imaginary Letters (Six Letters of William Bland Burn to His Wife) The Code of a Herdsman.III",7.

[31] ibid., 3.

[32] ibid., 4.

[33] Lewis, "The Foxes' Case", 77.

[34] ibid., 76.

[35] Lewis, The Art of Being Ruled, 96.

[36] ibid., 97-98.

[37] Lewis, America and Cosmic Man, 34-35.

[38] Lewis, Left Wings over Europe, 287-88.

[39] ibid., 97-98.

[40] ibid., 61-63.

[41] Lewis, Hitler, 31.

[42] ibid., 202.

[43] ibid., 33.

[44] ibid., 196.

[45] ibid., 199.

[46] Lewis, *The Hitler Cult*, 37.

[47] ibid., 37-38.

[48] Lewis, *The Mysterious Mr. Bull*, 92-93.

[49] Lewis, *The Hitler Cult*, 41.

[50] Lewis, *The Mysterious Mr. Bull*, 92.

[51] Lewis, *America and Cosmic Man*, 79.

[52] ibid., 55.

[53] ibid., 62.

[54] ibid., 148.

[55] Lewis, *Blasting and Bombardiering*, 303.

[56] Lewis, *Childermass*, 15.

[57] ibid., 8.

[58] ibid., 10.

[59] ibid., 10.

[60] ibid., 9.

[61] ibid., 9.

[62] ibid., 135.

[63] ibid., 135.

[64] ibid., 146-47.

[65] ibid., 143-44.

[66] ibid., 132.

[67] ibid., 80.

[68] ibid., 146.

[69] ibid., 146.

[70] ibid., 146.

[71] ibid., 60.

[72] ibid., 143.

[73] Lewis, Rotting Hill, 238.

[74] Lewis, Hitler, 194.

[75] ibid., 195.

[76] Lewis, Childermass, 156-57.

[77] Lewis, Time and Western Man, 351.

[78] Lewis, Childermass, 160.

[79] ibid., 271.

[80] Duchartre, The Italian Comedy, 209.

[81] Nicoll, The World of Harlequin, 87.

[82] ibid., 87.

[83] Lewis, Childermass, 227.

[84] ibid., 169.

[85] ibid., 181.

[86] ibid., 183.

[87] ibid., 186.

[88] ibid., 186.

[89] ibid., 189.

[90] ibid., 326.

[91] ibid., 256-57.

[92] Lewis, "The Foxes' Case", 90.

[93] Lewis, Childermass, 245.

[94] ibid., 359.

[95] ibid., 360.

[96] ibid., 356.

97 ibid., 308-09.

98 ibid., 333.

99 Lewis, Left Wings over Europe, 69.

100 ibid., 321.

101 ibid., 320-21.

102 Lewis, The Revenge for Love, 20.

103 ibid., 48.

104 ibid., 372.

105 ibid., 39.

106 ibid., 376-77.

107 Lewis, The Writer and the Absolute, 162.

108 Lewis, Rotting Hill, 39-40.

109 Lewis, The Revenge for Love, 144-45.

110 ibid., 202.

111 ibid., 276.

112 ibid., 275.

113 ibid., 175-76.

114 ibid., 253.

115 Lewis, The Diabolical Principle and the Dithyrambic Spectator, 36.

116 Lewis, Rude Assignment, 149.

CHAPTER SIX

1 Lewis, Time and Western Man, 392.

2 Lewis, Rotting Hill, 285.

3 ibid., x.

[4] ibid., xii.

[5] ibid., 4.

[6] ibid., 6.

[7] ibid., 3.

[8] ibid., 5.

[9] ibid., 24-25.

[10] ibid., 25.

[11] ibid., 28.

[12] ibid., 31.

[13] ibid., 34.

[14] ibid., 33.

[15] ibid., 272.

[16] ibid., 299.

[17] Lewis, _The Red Priest_, 38-39.

[18] Michael Ayrton, in his portraiture of Card for the dust-cover of the novel, has effectively accentuated the corrugated brow in the process of giving Card a rather fierce, menacing countenance. Other characters in Lewis's fiction wear significantly wrinkled brows. Mr. Patricks of _Rotting Hill_ is a mentally vigorous type who resembles Jean-Paul Sartre in several ways, but most noticeably by his "existential mask": "Of all his Sartrean attributes it is perhaps his corrugated forehead which is most important. It stamps him more than anything: it is the ruffled surface, plowed up and graved by the restless contriving beneath, as much as his trousers which are always horizontally creased by his ceaseless violent locomotion. So we have a facial index of the strain involved in conducting a high-pressure petty trade . . ." (Lewis, _Rotting Hill_, 216). See _The Writer and the Absolute_ for Lewis's discussion of Sartre. The central figure of _Self-Condemned_ also wears a wrinkled brow, this one "à la Descartes," it is noted in the narration, perhaps in keeping with his name. René Harding's brow is a more truly "existential mask" than Mr. Patricks' in the sense that Harding is an intensely philosophical type

who is engaged throughout the novel in an inner turmoil over the quality of his existence. On the other hand, it is partly a pose calculated to reflect his mental stress, whereas Mr. Patricks' expression is a quite natural and unconscious manifestation.

[19] Lewis, The Red Priest, 28.

[20] ibid., 29.

[21] ibid., 10.

[22] ibid., 153.

[23] The scene invites comparison with other scenes in Lewis in which the appearance in private of certain figures contradicts the image they are seeking to promote in public. Abershaw and Salmon, the alleged communist sympathizers in The Revenge for Love, appear in elegant "city suits" after enjoying a sumptuous meal in a restaurant. A similar contradiction occurs in Monstre Gai when the Bailiff appears in a dinner jacket as the host of a party of dignitaries in his own home.

[24] Lewis, The Red Priest, 92.

[25] ibid., 42-43.

[26] ibid., 108.

[27] ibid., 38.

[28] ibid., 52.

[29] ibid., 54.

[30] ibid., 57.

[31] ibid., 57.

[32] Lewis, Rotting Hill, 298-99.

[33] Lewis, The Red Priest, 160-61.

[34] Lewis, Left Wings over Europe, 12.

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